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ART. X. — *A History of the Romans under the Empire.* By CHARLES MERIVALE, B. D., late Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. London : Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans. 1850–62. 7 vols. 8vo.

It is a task of no ordinary difficulty which Mr. Merivale has undertaken in these volumes. No one can study the history of the Roman Empire, either in its origin and growth or in its decline and fall, without having Gibbon's great work constantly present to his mind as the standard by which the labors of other historians will be judged ; and certainly no one can attempt to write that history without feeling some degree of reluctance at having his work thus brought into comparison with a book, which, in spite of its acknowledged defects, has long held a foremost place in historical literature, and must always stand as one of the proudest monuments of English scholarship and genius, instead of being judged on its own merits. Mr. Merivale has not been unmindful of this disadvantage, and, relinquishing the full execution of his original plan, he has closed his narrative at the point where Gibbon's History begins, a hundred and fifty years before the transfer of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, the period which at first he selected for the limit of his work. "I have learnt by a trial of many years," he says on the last page of his seventh volume, "to distrust my qualifications for so grave a task. And other cares impede me, other duties warn me to desist. I have now reached the point at which the narrative of my great predecessor, Gibbon, commences, and, much as I regret that the crisis should be unfolded to the English reader by one who, unhappy in his school and in his masters, in his moral views and spiritual training, approached it with all his mighty powers under a cloud of ignoble prejudices, I forbear myself from entering the lists in which he has long stalked alone and unchallenged." But, natural as is the disinclination which any one must experience at the thought of coming into direct competition with that great writer, Mr. Merivale has little reason to fear the result of a candid comparison of his own qualifications with those of his predecessor. Gib-

bon's reputation as an historian rests mainly on the vastness and variety of his learning, the philosophical spirit in which his work is composed, and the perpetual charm of his rich and sonorous style. In respect to the first of these characteristics our author is scarcely surpassed by the earlier writer; for if his knowledge is less multifarious, it is at least sufficiently abundant for every purpose of his History, and is as thorough and exact as Gibbon's, while he possesses a signal advantage in his large acquaintance with the latest fruits of classical scholarship, and the most recent archæological discoveries. In respect to the second qualification for his task which Gibbon possessed, it will not be denied that, other things being equal, a sincere believer in the truths of revealed religion will be a safer guide along the pathway of imperial Rome, than one who seldom lets any opportunity pass without flinging scorn or contempt on the disciples of the new dispensation; and in dealing with those questions which are in any way connected with the position and character of the Jews and the early Christians, Mr. Merivale's candor stands in marked contrast with the pitiful spirit exhibited by the infidel writer. At the same time, he traces the secret springs of action by which the prominent personages in his narrative were moved, and unfolds the connection between the laws of Rome at different periods of its history, and the social and political condition of the people resulting from their immediate or indirect operation, with a skill not less remarkable than that of his predecessor. But in respect to the third characteristic which we have mentioned, his inferiority is very apparent. His style is deficient in strength, harmony, and precision; and, from the faulty construction of his sentences, it is often difficult to extract from them the meaning which they are intended to convey, while he seldom or never rises into eloquence. As his work progresses, his style gains in ease and fluency; and in this particular his later volumes are his best. In a word, so far as mere expression is concerned, Gibbon's immense superiority must be conceded without hesitation; but when we enter on a more searching criticism of the two writers, it must be admitted that Merivale has as firm a grasp of his subject as Gibbon, and that his work is characterized by a greater freedom from prejudice, and a sounder philosophy.

In spite, however, of the respect in which Mr. Merivale's labors must be held, few readers can close his History without disappointment. The magnificent promise of his first three volumes is not redeemed by the completed work. He has not only brought his narrative to a sudden and unexpected close, but even in the fragment now before us he has not satisfied the just expectations which might have been formed from the unsurpassed brilliancy and power of his preliminary dissertations and narratives. As he very justly remarks on two occasions, the history of the Empire properly dates from the year of the city 731, when the tribunitian power was conferred on Augustus. From the battle of Pharsalia to this period Rome was in a transition state; and though some knowledge of the last years of the Republic is necessary for a right understanding of the history of the Empire, any account of the events which preceded the establishment of the monarchy ought to be composed with a due regard to the minuteness of detail in the body of the History. This consideration appears to have been entirely overlooked by Mr. Merivale, and he has sacrificed the symmetry of his work to a desire to make his readers thoroughly acquainted with a period which does not legitimately come within the limits indicated by the title prefixed to his volumes. It is not until we reach his thirty-fifth chapter that the narrative properly begins; and in the remaining thirty-four chapters, which occupy a little more than half of the work, we have the history of two centuries, from the year of the city 731 to the year 933, or from 23 years before Christ to the year 180 of the Christian era. The introductory chapters, which extend over a period of only thirty-five years, cover almost as many pages, therefore, as the whole of the subsequent History. No intelligent and thoughtful reader, indeed, can regret the length to which Mr. Merivale has pushed his preliminary inquiries, or can wish to abridge his narrative of the life of Julius Cæsar, and it is true that there is a paucity of materials for the history of the Empire during a later period; but still this disproportion of its various parts is a serious defect in the work.

Another and not less striking defect in Mr. Merivale's plan is seen in the frequency and length of his episodes. From

the nature of his subject, which he has designated as the "History of the Romans," rather than the "History of Rome," it was inevitable that his work should have a less obvious unity than if its theme had been circumscribed by narrower limits. In the course of such a narrative, the historian must often pass from the city to the provinces, from one province to another, and even from one continent to another. Only thus could he have carried out the design which he announced in the Preface to the first edition of his first two volumes. "I shall endeavor," he wrote, "to trace throughout the long period before me the effects of conquest and supremacy upon the Roman people; the reaction of the provinces upon the capital; the struggles of the conquered nations to assert for themselves a share in the dignities and privileges of the conquering race; and the gradual fusion into one mass of Italians, Britons, Africans, and Orientals." But in the execution of this design he has made his episodes unnecessarily frequent, and has introduced them too abruptly, so that the reader, particularly in the first two volumes, is often puzzled to retain the thread of the narrative through the shifting scenes of the History, or to recover it if once lost. In his "History of England," Lord Macaulay labored under the same difficulty, from the necessity of combining in one narrative an account of the civil and military transactions in Ireland and Scotland, as well as of those which occurred in England, and, in several instances, of events on the Continent; but his success in overcoming this difficulty shows that it is not insuperable, and his example might have been profitably followed by Mr. Merivale. Added to the risk of confusion which arises from this tendency to multiply episodes and digressions, the continuity of the narrative is repeatedly broken by the interpolation of chapters presenting a general survey of the social and political condition of the Empire at some specified time. These chapters are among the most important and attractive portions of the work, and nowhere else are the historian's learning and ability better shown; but the intervals between the periods selected for these surveys are too brief, and the changes from time to time too slight, to compensate for the disadvantages resulting from their frequent recurrence. If the materials on which they are

based had been combined into a smaller number of chapters, some repetitions might have been avoided, the narrative would have been rendered more compact, and the reader would probably have borne away from these masterly surveys a stronger and clearer impression of the actual condition of the Empire, and of the general tendency of the imperial policy.

The first and perhaps the most striking excellence of our author as an historian is his great skill in forming in his own mind, and reproducing on his pages, a clear and lifelike image of each of the great men whose actions he describes. Julius Cæsar, Pompeius, Augustus, Antonius, Tiberius, Vespasian, and the rest, each has a distinct individuality, and we can understand each almost as well as if we had known him personally. In only two or three instances do we fail to get a clear idea of the man, though we may sometimes be inclined to modify the opinion expressed. This praise of our author's skill in analyzing and painting character must, however, be understood as referring solely to the general impression which the account of each individual actor is suited to produce on the mind of a reader: for the brilliant word-painting in which Lord Macaulay excelled, Mr. Merivale has no skill; and it is doubtful whether a single cabinet portrait can be found in his whole seven volumes which can fairly be brought into comparison with the "characters" in which the "History of England" is so rich. If in any other respect Mr. Merivale fails in his portraiture of the Roman emperors and statesmen, it is in an inclination to paint them in too favorable colors. "It is not the province of the historian," he says, "to condemn or absolve the great names of human annals." But fortunately he has not always adhered to this narrow view of the duties of an historian, and he has somewhat qualified it by admitting, almost in the same sentence, that it is the business of the historian "to distinguish, in analyzing the causes of events, between the personal views of the actors in revolutions and the general interests which their conduct subserved, and to claim for their deeds the sympathy of posterity in proportion as they tended to the benefit of mankind." Acting, however, on this principle, he has for the most part been very lenient in his judgments; and it is curious to observe that in general he is

inclined to be more severe in his estimate of the women than of the men of ancient Rome. The two Julias, the elder and the younger Agrippina, and Messalina are painted in darker colors than Tiberius, Caius, Claudius, and Nero.

Connected with this moderation in his estimate of individuals is another crowning excellence in his character as an historian. He is not only free from that avowed partisanship which is seen in Mr. Grote's "History of Greece," but throughout his work he preserves a calm and philosophical spirit; and this impartiality of judgment is due, not to indifference as to the final result of the long contest between the two great divisions of Roman society, but to the original structure of his mind, which is eminently candid. His opinions of the leaders and factions whose acts pass in review before him are settled and consistent, and he never hesitates to express them with entire frankness; but he seldom allows his personal feelings to color his narrative, or to affect his judgment of the various parties in the state. His sympathy with the first two Cæsars is neither concealed nor disguised, and in the chapters which are devoted to an account of their lives and an examination of their policy and institutions, his strength is most clearly exhibited. This sympathy with the enemies of the Republic is distinctly avowed in the Preface to the second edition of his first two volumes, but it is accompanied by an explicit declaration that he condemns the senatorial government only because it was not suited to the condition of affairs in Rome at that time. "The sway of the Roman oligarchy," he writes, "it can never be too loudly proclaimed, was the most wasting tyranny the civilized world has ever witnessed. Mankind groaned in misery and degradation, that a hundred families might have the privilege of slandering and slaying one another. But if in the following pages there appear any sympathy for the persons or the institutions of a Julius or an Augustus, it need not be imputed to any abstract leaning towards despotic rule or misappreciation of the blessings of genuine liberty. My views are confined to a comparison of the rival systems, as they contended for mastery at Rome under circumstances of society which I would fain hope are altogether exceptional. I wish only to assert, in the name of our common humanity, that the Roman oligarchy

deserved to perish, and that its destroyers were benefactors to their species." His impartiality does not, therefore, arise from that indifference as to all moral distinctions which sometimes passes for impartiality, but from a sincere wish to do justice to the honest intentions of each of the contending factions. One important consideration, indeed, we think he overlooks; namely, that the Roman parties were personal rather than political. Many, perhaps the greater number, of those who arrayed themselves under the banners of Cæsar or of Pompeius did so from personal motives, and with no intelligent convictions as to the merits of the policy advocated by one or the other of these great men. The Roman legislation was for the most part designed for the benefit of a class, and had little reference to the principles of the constitution. It is an error, therefore, which even Mr. Merivale occasionally commits, to carry into the first century before Christ the ideas of our own age, and to speak of the Roman parties as if they bore any direct resemblance to the political parties under a constitutional government in modern times.

The key-note to this History is a passage from the poet Rutilius, which is cited in the Preface to the first edition of the first two volumes, and again referred to in the "Additional Preface to the Complete Work."

"Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam,
Profuit injustis, te dominante, capi :
Dumque offers victis proprii consortia juris,
Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat."

In accordance with the leading thought in this apostrophe, it is a chief object of the work to trace the effect of the various measures for enlarging the limits of the Latin or the Roman citizenship, and to show how they tended in one direction to strengthen the state, and in another to weaken it, while at the same time the author shows how little ground there was for the boast that this extension of the franchise, and this fusion of various races into one body politic, was a voluntary act dictated by a far-sighted policy. With a firm and comprehensive grasp of his subject which is seldom relaxed, he describes the successive acts of the Senate or the victorious Emperor for extending this much-desired boon to the subject nations or

cities, and points out the immediate or remote effect of each grant on Rome itself. The curtailment of his original plan has prevented the full development of this thought; for it entered into his design to show that "the crowning event which obliterates the last vestige of Roman sentiments, the establishment of Christianity, was in fact the conquest of Rome by her own subjects." But it underlies the whole of his work, and is specially noticeable in his earlier volumes, in which he describes the reforms commenced by Julius Cæsar, and more fully carried out by Augustus. To the first Cæsar Rome was mainly indebted for the infusion of provincial blood into the senatorial body, and his successors only continued a policy which he thus inaugurated, and which was in truth the cornerstone of the Empire.

In tracing the history of Rome under the light of this thought, Mr. Merivale everywhere exhibits a thorough acquaintance with Latin literature in all its departments, and also with the best fruits of modern scholarship. "The volumes of Michelet, Amedée Thierry, Duruy, Hoeck, Abeken, and others, have lain open before me throughout the course of my own studies," he says in speaking of his first two volumes; "and the elaborate work of Drumann, in which he has amassed every notice of antiquity, and connected them all together with admirable ingenuity and judgment, has supplied me with a storehouse of references, to which I have not scrupled to resort freely. But without affecting originality, which could only have been extremely defective, I believe that much of my reading, and most of my conclusions, may lay claim at least to independence." So long as he can follow in the footsteps of Livy and Tacitus, of Suetonius, Plutarch, and Dion, and so long as he can make use of Cæsar's Commentaries, they are, from the necessity of the case, his chief guides, though he often questions their statements and dissents from their judgments; but he has neglected no source of information which modern research has made available, and many judicious quotations from the earlier and the later writers of Rome itself attest the thoroughness of his scholarship. His critical knowledge of the Latin language and literature had been abundantly shown by his contributions to the "*Arundines Cami*"

long before he began his History, and the felicity of the translations by which he has occasionally illustrated his narrative must strike every reader.

In the less important characteristics of wit and humor, which give such an irresistible charm to Lord Macaulay's pages, and have contributed so largely to Mr. Carlyle's popularity, he is undoubtedly deficient, and we cannot now recall an instance in which he has enlivened his narrative by a single remark that is likely to provoke a smile. His work owes its interest entirely to the magnificent theme of which it treats, to his comprehensive grasp of his subject, to the ample stores of learning employed in its illustration, and to the consummate skill with which he individualizes the various actors who have a place on his crowded pages. In the description of the various military operations in the first half of his work he specially excels, and probably few readers have had so clear an idea of the Roman tactics as they will gather from these volumes. His battle-pieces are among the most successful portions of his History, and show at once how carefully he has studied the original authorities, and from how wide a survey of his subject his work has been composed. But admirable as are these descriptions, they are surpassed by his pictures of social life in Rome in the age of Augustus, and by his topographical account of the city at the same period, to both of which we shall have occasion to refer at greater length in another place. One other portion of his work deserves to be specially noticed in this connection,—his account of the Roman jurisprudence, which ought to be read as the complement of the masterly chapter which Gibbon has devoted to the same interesting theme. Taken together, they furnish a full and satisfactory summary of the principles and provisions of the Roman law under the Empire, and it is no small praise to Mr. Merivale to say, that, even in regard to this subject, his labors will not suffer by a comparison with those of his great predecessor, whose successful treatment of its difficulties has been universally recognized.

It is not, perhaps, easy to determine what place Mr. Merivale's labors are likely to hold permanently in historical literature. One or two suggestions on this point, however,

we may venture to offer; and at the outset we may say, without hesitation, that it is not probable that anything better than his first four volumes will ever be published on the period to which they relate. They must take rank with the best historical works of our age, in spite of some defects of style and some want of unity of design. But in regard to the later volumes, it is not possible to feel the same degree of confidence; and in the seventh volume the evidences of a growing weariness on the part of the writer are too obvious to be overlooked. His style, indeed, as we have remarked, had gained in ease and directness; but this improvement does not compensate for a less vigorous and comprehensive treatment of the subject. On the whole, therefore, few persons will be likely to concur in the judgment of those critics who pronounce him a greater historian than any of his contemporaries, while it cannot be denied that his work is a most important contribution to historical literature, and that, if the completed History had redeemed the promise of the earlier volumes, it would scarcely have been possible to exaggerate its merits.

In passing from these general remarks to a more specific examination of Mr. Merivale's labors, it must be conceded that he has been very fortunate in his choice of a subject, and that, even if his work had been much less worthy of praise, it would still have been sure of a favorable reception. For the history of Rome down to the death of Julius Cæsar we have the scholarly volumes of Dr. Arnold, which, if not altogether satisfactory, at least reflect no discredit on English scholarship; and for the later years of the Empire, Gibbon's great work will probably always be a principal authority. But for the interval between the close of the one and the opening of the other there is no work in our language which can be compared with either. It would have been better, indeed, as Mr. Merivale himself admits, if, instead of beginning his History nominally with the foundation of the Empire, but really with the first campaign of Cæsar in Gaul, he had so enlarged his plan as to commence with the period of the Gracchi, and had "introduced the history of the Empire with an account of the century preceding it." Still, the period

included within his narrative is one of the most momentous in the annals of the ancient world, and can never lose its attractiveness to the student of classical literature, or indeed to any one who is interested in comparing ancient and modern civilization, and in tracing the effects of political institutions on the condition of a people. The elements of self-destruction in the constitution of the Republic; the external circumstances by which its downfall was precipitated, and the erection of a monarchy was rendered inevitable; the personal characters of the men who took part in these events; the nature and extent of the reforms instituted by Augustus; the comparative worth of the literature of the Augustan age; the reaction of the vices of Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero on the Senate and the people; the conquest of Judæa; the general characteristics of the Flavian period; the distinctive merits of its literature; the changes introduced into the Roman law between the accession of Augustus and the death of Marcus Aurelius; and the growth of the city both in size and magnificence;—these and many other topics of scarcely inferior interest must be examined in any satisfactory survey of this period, and to some of them we purpose now to refer, for the most part under Mr. Merivale's judicious guidance. Before entering on this examination, it may be useful to cast a glance over the period anterior to the accession of Augustus, considered from the point of view assumed by our author.

Throughout the history of the Roman Republic, and even for some years after the foundation of the Empire, two antagonistic principles were in almost constant operation,—one the natural expression of the Roman character, and the other deriving its whole strength from the circumstances in which the inhabitants of Rome were placed. On the one hand, as our author very happily remarks, they “scorned the humanizing pursuits of commerce,” and, by establishing “the most odious distinctions between themselves and their subjects,” sought to isolate themselves from other nations. On the other hand, by the very fact that they were a warlike race, they were brought into frequent contact and collision, not only with the neighboring tribes, but also with more distant nations; and for their own security they were obliged to relax

somewhat of their exclusiveness, and to grant various privileges to those subdued by their arms. By no other means could they have hoped to retain their conquests for any considerable length of time. These concessions, however, were always granted with reluctance ; and not a few of the fiercest conflicts in which Rome was engaged grew out of the unsatisfied claims of the nations which had been previously subjugated. But it was not in reference to this question of the franchise alone that the two principles of exclusion and of comprehension were at issue. From a very early period in the history of the commonwealth, the patrician families had sought to consolidate all the power of the government in their own hands, while the plebeians had constantly endeavored to wrest from them new rights and privileges. The same instinct of self-preservation which had led in numerous instances to the grant of the Latin franchise to individuals and communities, and finally of the Roman franchise to the whole of Italy, also led to important concessions in the fierce struggle waged within the city itself, first, between the patricians and the plebeians, and afterward between the rich and the poor. The first peaceful victory in this long conflict was won after the secession of the lower classes, by their acquisition of the right to nullify any measure of the Senate by the simple veto of the Tribunes ; and this victory was followed, a century and a quarter afterward, by the elevation for the first time of a plebeian to the consulship, and by the Licinian rogations, which limited the quantity of land that each citizen might possess. The final victory was gained in the enactment of the Agrarian laws of the Gracchi for a redistribution of the land which had again become concentrated in the hands of a few persons ; but these laws were imperfectly executed, and the assassination of the popular leaders in some measure reopened the questions at issue, and further increased the bitterness of the strife. Before the generation which witnessed the death of the younger Gracchus had passed away, the Social War broke out, and in this contest many of the popular leaders rendered open or secret aid to the Italian allies, in whose success they felt a natural interest. The war ended, as we have seen, in the triumph of the enemies of the oligarchy, though they were

everywhere defeated on the field of battle. Contemporaneously with the enfranchisement of the Italians came the long-anticipated victory of the plebeians; but their first brief advantage was followed by an oligarchical reaction under Sulla, whose vigorous measures crushed for a time the spirit of the popular leaders, and inspired in the nobles the hope of a long continuance of their power. In the subsequent contests, the two principal factions in great measure lost sight of the original ground of controversy. Class distinctions were less considered when personal ambition began to assert its influence. The patrician Julius succeeded to the leadership of the Marians, while the plebeian Pompeius was accepted as the head of the senatorial or oligarchical faction.

The civil wars and party proscriptions to which the Romans had become accustomed during this protracted struggle produced their natural effect on the character of the people. "The frightful corruption of the Roman government in the provinces," as Mr. Merivale well remarks, "was symptomatic of the general relaxation of public morality at home. On turning our eyes to the great metropolis from whence this stream of profligacy issued, we find every act of its senate, its comitia, and its forum marked with the same stain of selfishness and venality." Religion had lost its hold on the people, and was treated with open scorn or secret contempt; the judges listened to no argument so readily as to their own violent prejudices or to a timely bribe; the elections were no longer free, and not unfrequently mere violence took the place of corruption, so that "the great public magistracies were left vacant for many months, from the impossibility of conducting the elections with even a show of legitimate order"; the domestic relations were in a state which showed only too plainly the utter and shameless depravity of public and private morals; a few persons possessed enormous wealth, while the great mass of the people grovelled in extreme poverty, and a considerable part even of the native population were fed by public charity; the soldiers had lost, by their long continuance in service, the tastes and habits of citizens, and attached themselves to the persons and fortunes of their leaders, with little or no thought except of personal advantage to themselves; and, in a word,

the numerous vices which civil war engenders were everywhere rife, with a violence which it is difficult for us now to understand, and were everywhere preparing the way for the overthrow of the commonwealth.

It was at this crisis of public affairs, when the inevitable tendency of events was to throw all power into the hands of one man, that Cæsar crossed the Rubicon, and kindled once more the embers of civil strife. The history of his administration in Transalpine Gaul, of his successful military operations, and of the circumstances which led him thus to seek redress for his grievances by the dreadful arbitrament of civil war, is related by Mr. Merivale with great minuteness of detail and consummate skill in the arrangement of his materials, and need not now detain us: it is sufficient to observe that there is no more brilliant series of campaigns recorded in ancient history than those which Cæsar conducted while Proconsul in Gaul, and that, if it is difficult or impossible to find a patriotic motive for his invasion of Italy, it must at least be conceded that the course pursued by his enemies affords some ground of apology for it. The news that he had actually passed the frontier filled with consternation the senatorial leaders, whose unjust treatment of him was the ostensible ground for this movement; and such was the terror of the Consuls, that they did not delay their flight from Rome even for the brief period needed to remove the public treasure. The feeble and vacillating movements of his great rival, Pompeius, to whom the command of the senatorial legions had been confided, were not of a character to revive the courage of the timid and frightened Senators. After some ineffectual negotiations with the advancing enemy, Pompeius retreated to Brundisium, and not long afterward withdrew from Italy, with the design of transferring the seat of war to the shores of Greece. Meanwhile Cæsar had not been idle. In the brief space of sixty days he had made himself master of Italy, with scarcely any effusion of blood. "Never, perhaps," says our author, "was so great a conquest effected so rapidly and in the face of antagonists apparently so formidable. Every step he advanced was a surprise to his enemies; yet at each step they predicted more confidently his approaching discomfiture. But at the

first blast of his trumpets every obstacle fell before him, and the march of his legions could hardly keep up with the retreat of his boastful adversaries. The Consuls abandoned Rome before he was competent to approach it; their lieutenants, deserted by their troops, plundered of their treasure, and denuded of the materials of war, found themselves alone and defenceless in their camps before the invader appeared in sight."

The plans which Pompeius had formed for the conduct of the war appear to have been skilfully devised; but they were not executed with the ability which he had exhibited when a younger man. After some indecisive engagements, in which the advantage remained with the Pompeians, the armies of the rival leaders finally met on the plains of Pharsalia. The victory was sharply contested; but the superior discipline and daring of Cæsar's forces gave an early and signal triumph to their chief, and Pompeius himself was obliged to seek safety in flight. After reaching the coast, at no great distance from the scene of his defeat, he took ship for Egypt, with the hope, perhaps, of renewing the contest; but on his arrival there he was basely murdered by command of Cleopatra, even before he touched the inhospitable shore.

By the fall of Pompeius, Cæsar was left without a rival worthy of the name; and after some time passed in Egypt, whither he also had proceeded, and where he was retained by the blandishments of Cleopatra, he returned to Rome to consolidate the power which he had won with so little effort. His possession of supreme and undivided authority lasted for a little more than three years, from the battle of Pharsalia to his death. But during this brief period, which included a campaign in Africa, and an absence of several months in Spain, he exhibited great administrative ability; and the effects of his measures were long visible in the condition of the people. Among the first laws which he promulgated was one restricting luxurious habits, both in respect to dress and to the table; but the failure of this measure did not discourage him, and it was speedily followed by other enactments designed to cure some of the existing evils, and, as Mr. Merivale suggests, "to break down the pre-eminence of the wealthiest class." For this pur-

pose he restricted the term of the provincial governments to one year in the prætorian, and to two years in the consular provinces, reduced the official terms of the Consuls to a few months, or even, according to one writer, to a few days; increased the number of the Senators to nine hundred, or nearly double what it is supposed to have been when he began his reforms, and conferred the full rights of Roman citizenship on many of the provincial states. To the veterans who had served under him in Gaul, in Greece, and in Spain, he awarded some small territories in Italy for the formation of new colonies; but, with a wiser and more magnanimous policy than his predecessors had shown, he distributed the greater number of his legionaries over the country, instead of collecting them in large bodies, and it is said that as many as eighty thousand persons were transferred to Greece and Africa, in order to give increased strength to the provinces. At the same time, with a view to check the rapid decrease of the free population, he forbade any citizen between the age of twenty and forty from spending more than three years abroad, and required all owners of flocks and herds to "employ free labor to the extent of at least one third of the whole." Nor did his efforts in this direction stop here. To every father of three legitimate children born at Rome, of four born elsewhere in Italy, or of five of provincial birth, he granted a partial exemption from taxation; and these privileges, says Mr. Merivale, "became the basis of much subsequent legislation, and established certain principles in Roman jurisprudence from which it never afterwards departed." By another important enactment, which was, however, directly opposed to the general tendency of his laws, he provided that judges should be taken only from the Senators or the knights, to the exclusion of the ærarian tribunes who had formerly enjoyed this privilege. Two other measures of even greater practical importance ought also to be mentioned in this connection, — his plan for the compilation of a map of the whole Empire from actual surveys, and his reformation of the calendar.

It cannot be doubted that Cæsar, on the whole, retained his early popularity in Rome, and that in instituting these reforms he felt sure of his ground; but he was closely watched by a

powerful faction who were ready to take advantage of any false step. Soon it began to be noised abroad that he aspired to the title of king; and it is not improbable that the rumor had some foundation in fact. "It was in the counsels of his friends, at least," says Mr. Merivale, "that the idea of obtaining it appeared to originate; and it was, perhaps, first suggested to them by the craft of his enemies, who sought thereby to exasperate the nation against him." But whatever may have been the origin of the report, and however much or little of truth there may have been in it, it served to unite a formidable band of conspirators, pledged to his destruction. The 15th of March, in the year 710, was fixed on for the execution of their design; and on that day he was publicly assassinated in the Capitol. As soon as he had taken his seat in the Senate-house, the conspirators crowded around him, under pretext of presenting a petition; and while he was listening to their importunities, Publius Casca drew a weapon, and by an ill-directed stroke grazed the victim's shoulder. The first blow was the signal for a general attack, and, after a short struggle, Cæsar fell at the foot of the statue of Pompeius, pierced with twenty-three wounds, of which, it is said, only one was in itself mortal.

The character of the first Cæsar has already been examined at some length in this journal,* and we need add nothing on this point to the views which were then offered. For our present purpose, however, it is important to remark, that, in spite of his splendid abilities and his creative genius, Cæsar was the genuine product of the age in which he lived; or, to adopt the judicious language of Mr. Merivale, that his disposition and conduct "correspond faithfully with the intellectual and moral development of the age of which he was the most perfect representative. He combined literature with action, humanity with sternness, free-thinking with superstition, energy with voluptuousness, a noble and liberal ambition with a fearful want of moral principle. In these striking inconsistencies, which none but himself could blend in one harmonious temperament, he represented the manifold conflicting tendencies which appeared in various proportions in the character of

* North American Review, No. 151, Art. VII.

the Roman nobility, at a period when they had thrown off the formal restraints of their Etruscan discipline, and the specious indulgence of Hellenic cultivation lured them into vice, selfishness, and impiety."

The period between the murder of Cæsar and the battle of Actium covers, in our author's narrative, nearly three hundred and fifty pages. The measures taken by Antonius to secure the succession, under pretence of carrying out the will of Cæsar; the adroit policy pursued by Octavius; the formation of the Triumvirate; the defeat of the assassins, and final overthrow of the republican cause; the virtual expulsion of Lepidus; the rivalry of Antonius and Octavius, culminating in civil war; the great battle of Actium, with its vast train of results; the flight of Antonius to Egypt, and his death there; and the ultimate triumph of Octavius,—are all described by Mr. Merivale with a wealth of learning and a vigor and clearness of statement which leave little, if anything, to be desired in this part of his narrative, and we should be glad to follow his steps along this transition period, if the limits which we have prescribed to ourselves would permit such an examination as its importance demands. We cannot take leave, however, of this period without citing with strong commendation the passage in which our author speaks of the importance of the battle of Actium, and of its far-reaching effects. He says:—

"As a spectacle, a sea-fight in modern times is said to be obscure and uninteresting. The manœuvres it admits of are few and simple, and the skill and courage of the combatants could hardly be appreciated at a distance, even if the thick pall of smoke which envelopes them with little intermission did not conceal them from the spectator and from each other. But a naval battle of antiquity must have presented a far more exciting spectacle. The field of view was not too extensive, the atmosphere was unclouded by smoke, and the movements of attack and defence at so many different points were even more diversified than the charge and recoil of battalions on land. The contrast between the size and tactics of the vessels engaged at Actium must have added variety and interest to the scene, as beheld from either shore of the Ambracian gulf; and it was beheld by two armies comprising perhaps twice an hundred thousand spectators, whose emotions of hope and fear, of delight and consternation, were expressed in many a roar of exultation or long-drawn murmur of anxiety. But the moral

setting of the picture endues it with a still higher charm. The masters of Roman song have vied with one another in adorning with the hues of the imagination the decision of the *world's debate*. Horace brands the inebriate frenzy of the Egyptian, who had dared to threaten with ruin the Capitol and the Empire. Propertius ascribes the triumph to Apollo, who cast aside his lyre and grasped his bow, and exhausted his quiver in defence of Rome. Virgil assumes all his strength and majesty to delineate the crowning victory of his imperial hero. The East and West have met in decisive conflict, and the rout of Actium has prostrated the world before the fathers, the people, and the gods of his country.* The issue of the long struggle of the nations against the all-conquering Republic is indeed a momentous event in human annals. The laws and language, the manners and institutions of Europe, still bear witness to the catastrophe of Actium. The results it produced can never recur to our minds without impelling us to reflect upon the results we may suppose it to have averted. It would be monstrous indeed to admit that the triumph of Antonius could have permanently subjected Rome to Egypt, the West to the East. The vitality of European intellect would have thrown off the yoke of an inorganic and alien despotism; the spirit which defended Hellas from the Persian, and Christendom from the Moor, would have avenged Rome upon the Copt and the Arabian. But the genius of an Octavius could hardly have been replaced; none but himself among his own generation could have founded a dynasty on the ruins of the Republic, and in the next generation the opportunity would have passed away. The empire of Antonius would have been dismembered like that of Alexander, and in the first century, instead of the fifth, the Western world would have been split into petty and degenerate principalities. The Goths, let loose prematurely upon their victims, would have exterminated ideas which neither awed nor attracted them. The arts and manners of Rome would have left no deeper traces in the mind of Europe than Hellas has impressed upon Western Asia. The language of her Curia and her Forum would have been forgotten, and the writings of Cicero would have crumbled in her dust. We might guess her grandeur from her imperishable Cloaca, and measure her power by the foundations of her walls; but her roads and camps would be a marvel and a mystery, and Cæsar a name like Ninus or Sesostris." — Vol. III. pp. 322 – 325.

The victory at Actium had indeed sealed the fate of the Commonwealth, and left Octavius in a position to secure the

* "Hor. Od. I. 37; Propert. IV. 6. 55; Virg. Æn. VIII. 679."

undisputed possession of all the power in the state. From that moment he began to lay broad and deep the foundations of the monarchy, to the establishment of which the course of events had long tended. In accordance with the uniform policy of the Roman Emperors, he took care to attach the legionaries to his own person by large gifts, while he secured the support of the lower classes by keeping down the price of corn, and of the great body of the people by satisfying their desire for peace, after so many years of turmoil and bloodshed. Starting from the basis of personal popularity and from the disinclination of the people to a renewal of the scenes of internecine warfare to which they had been so long accustomed, he gradually concentrated in his own person the various functions which had before been exercised by the Senate and the different magistrates. Meanwhile he exhibited a clemency and moderation which furnish the key-note to the whole of his subsequent policy. In the same year in which he celebrated his triple triumph he closed the doors of the temple of Janus in token of the existence of universal peace, a condition of affairs which it was said had existed but once before in a period of more than six hundred years. Not long afterward a rumor was widely circulated that he seriously meditated resigning the power to which he had thus succeeded, and Dion introduces into his narrative the account of a supposed debate on this subject between Octavius and his chief friends and advisers, Agrippa and Mæcenas. But, as Mr. Merivale well remarks, "we shall hardly believe that the undisputed master of the Republic, at the age of thirty-three, seriously debated within himself whether he should descend from the elevation to which he had dared to aspire at nineteen." On the contrary, in this very year he accepted the permanent command of all the military forces of the state, and almost at the same time he was invested with the powers, though not with the title, of Censor. In the execution of the latter office, he voluntarily named Agrippa as his associate, apparently with a view of shifting to another the odium which was likely to follow a rigorous exercise of the powers of the censorship; and before he closed his revision of the senatorial list, nearly two hundred names were stricken from it, either by the voluntary with-

drawal of persons who thus confessed their unworthiness or by the exercise of his own power. By virtue of the same authority he caused a census of the Roman people to be taken, which showed the number of persons capable of bearing arms to be a little more than four millions.

The next step in this great work of concentration was his appointment as Princeps, or first of the Senate, a position which did not indeed give him any direct increase of authority, but which enabled him in great measure to guide the deliberations of the legislative body, and smoothed the way to further acquisitions. Having thus attained an elevation which placed him beyond the fear of rivals, he determined to pause before claiming new honors and new powers, and to strengthen the personal popularity on which he saw that his supremacy must rest, at least for some years. With this design he celebrated in Rome, at his own expense, during his sixth consulship, a festival in commemoration of his victory at Actium, quadrupled the customary largess of corn, and granted pecuniary aid to the poorer members of the Senate, and to numerous individuals whose circumstances would not allow them to undertake the more costly magistracies; and at the same time, assuming the duty of making adequate compensation to the state, he remitted most of the arrearages of debt due to the national treasury. Nor was this all. By a single edict he swept away every enactment of the Triumvirate which bore with oppressive weight on any class of the citizens; and by his persuasive words and example he induced many persons to erect costly edifices for the ornament of the city and the display of their own magnificence. "Nothing," says Mr. Merivale, "could exceed the outward signs of prosperity which attended the foundation of the new constitution of Rome. Amidst the acclamations of the people, the gratitude of the nobles, and the zealous services of his associates and ministers, Octavius might tread the ground firmly and feel his footing sure." He determined, therefore, to affect a still higher degree of magnanimity, and, by the exhibition of an unhesitating confidence in the people, to secure a still firmer basis for his ambitious designs. He caused himself to be appointed Consul for the seventh time, and then, on the 1st of January, in the

year of the city 727, he formally tendered to the Senate the resignation of his imperial functions, in accordance with the design which he is said to have meditated two years before. That this resignation was inspired by the motives which we have suggested, and was proffered with a certainty that it would not be accepted, scarcely admits of a reasonable doubt. Octavius was not disappointed in regard to its effects. It was not accepted, but on the contrary it furnished the occasion for a further accession of power and dignity. The Imperium was conferred on him again for the additional term of ten years, together with the proconsular authority, and this grant was renewed at the expiration of every decennial term during the remainder of his life.

The renewed grant of the imperial power was followed by his assumption of the title of Augustus, a designation which had never before been borne by any man, but had been appropriated to the most sacred rites of religion and to the temples of the gods, and which, therefore, was peculiarly suited to mark his pre-eminence in the state. Three years afterward the Senate released him from the provisions of the Cincian law, an enactment of somewhat doubtful bearing, but which is supposed to have limited the amount of gifts either in money or real property; and at the same time the restrictions of the *lex annalis* were annulled in respect to Marcellus, the son of his sister Octavia, and to Tiberius, the son of his wife Livia by a former husband. Only one step more was needed to reach the desired goal on which his eyes had long been fixed, and this was taken in the year 731, when the tribunitian power was conferred on him for life. He was already the commander-in-chief of the armies, and the Princeps of the Senate; and by virtue of this new grant he succeeded to all the authority which the Tribunes of the people had wielded for nearly five hundred years. In the well-considered language of our author, "It placed its possessor at once at the head of the popular element in the constitution. It might serve in other hands as a counterpoise, in those of Augustus as a complement, to the powers he already wielded. It made him chief of the people, as he had before become chief of the Senate. If he was already commander of the legions, he was now supreme

over the materials from which the legions were raised. At the same time some extension was given to the functions which he exercised as prince in the Senate, or in his proconsular capacity in the provinces. He was permitted to exercise a certain paramount authority even over the Prefects appointed by the Senate in the half of the Empire confided to its care. But the tribunitian power was still justly considered the keystone of the whole imperial edifice. From this period Augustus may deserve the title of Emperor." But he was not yet satisfied; and in the following year he obtained the consular power for life, and ten years afterward the supreme pontificate.

Mr. Merivale has devoted more than fifty pages to a thorough and exhaustive analysis of the imperial authority considered as "a combination of the prerogatives of several republican officers." But we are reluctantly compelled to forego any detailed examination of this subject, and also of the very able and instructive chapter in which he reviews "the constituent elements of the imperial administration," and describes "the political condition of the Roman people, the functions and prerogatives of the privileged orders, the powers of the principal magistrates, the government of the provinces, and the military and financial systems of the Empire, as constituted by the founder of the monarchy."

The principate of Augustus, from his acceptance of the tribunitian power to his death, covers a period of thirty-six years, and for the most part is characterized by a wise, moderate, and pacific policy. From the first he exhibited great respect for the formal part of religion; and among his earliest acts were the restoration of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius in the Capitol, and the erection of numerous other temples. He built the first temple to Mars which was ever erected within the walls of the city, and also consecrated a magnificent temple to Apollo, on the Palatine Hill, beside restoring the worship of the Lares and of the god Terminus. In his attempts to place some restraint on the licentious habits of the age, and to enforce new and more stringent laws than had ever before been enacted for the purpose of securing the marriage of citizens of mature years, he was less successful, and throughout his life he labored ineffectually to cure an evil which legislation could

not reach. Akin to these measures were his enactments "to limit in some degree the infusion of new and base blood into the body politic" by means of a tax on the manumission of slaves. His personal habits and manners were unassuming and dignified; his residence on the Palatine Hill was of moderate size; his dress was simple and of domestic manufacture; he went about the city on foot, accompanied by no more than the usual number of clients and slaves; entered into familiar conversation with his friends and guests; and was abstemious in his mode of living. But there is reason to believe that he did not recommend by his own example the chastity which it was the design of his laws to enforce; and the extreme profligacy of his daughter is one of the most startling proofs of the utter degradation of the Roman morals. Though his early manhood was passed in the camp and amidst scenes of civil strife, his later years were seldom disturbed by the sound of war. His step-sons, Tiberius and Drusus, carried on some campaigns beyond the Roman frontiers, and the close of his life was darkened by the revolt of the Pannonians, and by the overthrow of Varus with the loss of three legions in Germany; but for the greater part of the period during which he held undisputed sway in Rome, the Empire enjoyed an unwonted tranquillity.

Augustus made a profitable use of a condition of affairs so congenial to his own tastes; and, aided by the wise counsels of Agrippa and Mæcenas, he did much to enrich and beautify the imperial city, beside erecting temples in many of the principal cities in the provinces. To this topic Mr. Merivale has devoted one of his most attractive chapters. Of the approach to Rome, he gives a very animated and picturesque description, a part of which we extract.

"From whichever side of Italy the stranger approached the imperial city," he says, "he emerged from the defiles of an amphitheatre of hills upon a wide, open plain, near the centre of which an isolated cluster of eminences, moderate in height and volume, crowned with a vast assemblage of stately edifices, announced the goal towards which, for many a hundred miles, his road had been conducting him. There were two main routes which might have thus led him from the provinces to the capital, the Appian from Greece and Africa, and the Flaminian from

Gaul; but the lines of the Servian wall, which still bounded Rome in the age of Augustus, were pierced with eighteen apertures, each of which admitted a well-appointed road from the nearer districts of the peninsula. The approach to the greatest of cities was indicated also by works of another kind, the most magnificent and imposing in their character of any of the Roman constructions. In the time of Augustus, seven aqueducts brought water from distant sources to Rome. Some of these streams, indeed, were conveyed underground in leaden pipes throughout their whole course, till they were received into reservoirs within the walls, where they rose by their own weight to the level required for the supply of the highest sites. Others, however, entered the city upon a succession of stone arches, and of these the Aqua Marcia, which was derived from the Volscian mountains, was thus sumptuously conducted for a distance of 7,000 paces, before it reached the brow of the Esquiline Hill.* These monuments of the pomp and power of the people to whose wants they so ostentatiously ministered, were rendered the more impressive from the solitudes through which for many miles they planted their giant footsteps. The Campagna, or plain of Rome, at the present day the most awful image of death in the bosom of life anywhere to be witnessed, was already deserted by the vast swarms of population which three centuries before had made it the hive of Italy. The fertile fields of the Hernici and Æqui had been converted into pasture-land, and the cultivators of the soil, once the denizens of a hundred towns and villages, had gone to swell the numbers of the cities on the coast. Even the fastnesses in the hills had been abandoned in the general security from external attack; while the patrician villas with which Central Italy was studded were buried in the shade of woods or the cool recesses of the mountains. For many months of the year, it may be added, the heat was too oppressive for journeying by day, whenever it could be avoided; the commerce of Rome was chiefly carried on by means of the river;† and the necessities of warfare no longer required the constant passing and repassing at all hours of soldiers, couriers, and munitions. The practice of riding by night seems to have been generally adopted, so that the movement

* "Strabo, V. 3; Plin. Hist. Nat. XXXI. 3. 24. Corrected by Frontinus in his special treatise on the aqueducts, c. 7."

† "There are picturesque allusions to the movement on the river in Propertius, I. 14:

Et modo tam celeres mireris currere lintres,

Et modo tam tardas funibus ire rates :

and Martial, IV. 64:

Quem nec rumpere nauticum celeusma ;

Nec clamor valet helciariorum."

on the roads gave little sign by daylight of the vicinity of so vast a haunt of human beings, with their manifold interests and occupations.* Nor was the proximity of so great a city indicated, long before arriving at its gates, by suburbs stretching far into the surrounding plain. The rhetorical flights of certain writers who would assure us of the contrary, and persuade us that Rome sent forth her feelers as far as Aricia and Tibur, and that many cities were attached to the Great City by continuous lines of building, are plainly refuted by the simple fact that groves, villages, and separate houses are repeatedly mentioned as existing within three or four miles of the capital."† —Vol. IV. pp. 478–481.

Our author then proceeds to speak of the nearer approach to the city through the long lines of tombs by which the roadside was lined, and finally conducts his readers within the walls, describing the principal portions of the city, its hills, palace, and temples, with some suggestive remarks on the general character of the Roman architecture, and concluding with a very elaborate and careful estimate of the population in the time of Augustus. From the limited area of the city, and the absence of populous suburbs, from the recorded number of houses and the number of persons supplied with grain from the public stores, and from some other considerations of a similar character, he concludes that the whole population, including those who dwelt beyond the walls, must have fallen short of seven hundred thousand,—an estimate much below those usually formed, but which, nevertheless, rests on substantial grounds of argument, and probably is not far from the truth. As he well remarks, Rome was not

"calculated, from the position it held among the great cities of the Empire, to attain any vast development of population. It was neither a commercial nor a manufacturing city. It was not the emporium of a great transit trade, like Alexandria, nor the centre of exchange among a host of opulent neighbors, like Antioch. It was not surrounded by

* "Many indications might be alleged of the frequency of night travelling. The Allobroges were circumvented on their leaving Rome in the evening. Catilina made his exit from the city at night; so did Curio and Antonius. Comp. Juvenal, X. 19 :

*Pauca licet portes argenti vascula puri
Nocte iter ingressus."*

† "See the passages of the ancients, and ill-considered inferences of the moderns; in De la Malle, Econ. Pol. I. 375."

the teeming hives of life which encircled Babylon and Seleucia. Nor was it increased by the ever-accumulating wealth of all classes of society, like modern London, or by the constant tightening of the bands of centralization, by which the life-blood of the provinces is flooded back upon Paris. It was not the natural focus of attraction for the devotees of ease and luxury ; but every one who had the means escaped from it as often and as much as he could, and exchanged its ungenial climate and pestilential air for the cool breezes of the mountains or the coast, and the voluptuous recreations of a Campanian watering-place. The country around it was almost abandoned, in the imperial period, to the maintenance of cattle, and the drain of human life caused by its crowded state and baneful atmosphere was only replenished by immigration from distant shores. I will not compare it with Madrid, a mere royal residence, nor with the marble exhalation of St. Petersburg ; but of modern capitals Vienna may perhaps be considered most nearly to resemble it. Its great social characteristic was the entire absence of a middle class, the bone and sinew of cities as well as of empires ; and its population mainly consisted of the two orders of wealthy nobles on the one hand, whose means were in process of trituration under the pressure of the imperial imposts, and the poor citizens on the other, who clung to the forum and the circus for the sake of their amusements and largesses." —*Ibid.*, pp. 527, 528.

Nevertheless the streets of Rome were crowded in the time of Augustus with a busy and bustling population ; and in the second century of our era the number of the inhabitants had become so great that it was necessary to forbid the use of loaded wagons within the walls, lest their passage from one part of the city to another should interfere with the convenience and safety of pedestrians. As Mr. Merivale reminds us, Juvenal describes " the crush of these heavy-laden machines, and the portentous swinging of the long beams they carried, round the corners of the narrow streets, as among the worst nuisances and even terrors of the citizen's daily walk." The early Romans had had little idea of the size to which their mud-built city might grow, and when Augustus began to rebuild it, it must have been a most uncomfortable place of residence. Not only were its streets few and narrow, and the greater part of its population crowded into the valleys between its wide-spreading hills, but from its compactness, and the general use of wood as a building material, it was exposed to fre-

quent and extensive fires, and to this must be added a constant risk of inundation from the waters of the Tiber. At this time a large proportion of the population were of foreign birth, and it was a chief concern of Augustus and his successors, as well as of the richer citizens, to devise amusements for them, partly to display their own magnificence and partly to insure domestic tranquillity. For this purpose the Campus Martius was set apart, and numerous costly structures were erected, both within and without the walls, designed to accommodate the largest number of persons possible; and it is computed that the different theatres in existence in the time of Augustus could afford seats for as many as ninety thousand persons, while in the Circus Maximus there were seats for at least one hundred and fifty thousand more, or about a quarter part of the entire population. For the elevated pleasures of the Greek drama the populace of Rome had no taste, though they seem to have been, on the whole, fond of dancing and singing, and most of their dramatic performances were therefore mere pantomimes. Spectacles of all kinds, gladiatorial combats, conflicts with wild beasts, chariot-races, and feats of legerdemain afforded them their chief amusements, and, as Mr. Merivale pithily remarks, "their amusements were now their most serious occupations."

The patricians led a somewhat more active life, and of the manner in which a Roman noble passed the day our author has given a very vivid picture.

"The Roman noble," he says, "rose ordinarily at daybreak, and received at his levée the crowd of clients and retainers who had thronged the steps before his yet closed door from the hours of darkness.* A few words of greeting were expected on either side, and then, as the sun mounted the eastern sky, he descended from his elevated mansion into the Forum.† He might walk surrounded by the still lingering crowd, or he might be carried in a litter; but to ride in a wheeled vehicle on such occasions was no Roman fashion.‡ Once arrived in the

* "For the disposal of the Roman's day, see particularly Martial, IV. 8: *Prima salutantes atque altera continet hora*, &c. Comp. the younger Pliny's account of his uncle's day. *Epist.* III. 5; *Cf.* III. 1."

† "The phrases, *descendere in forum* or *in campum* (so Hor. III. 1, *Descendit in campum petitor*), refer to the comparative level of the noble mansion on the hill, and the public places in the valley or plain. *Champagny, Césars*, II. 256."

‡ "The Romans rode in carriages on a journey, but rarely for amusement, and

Forum, he was quickly immersed in the business of the day. He presided as a judge in one of the basilicas, or he appeared himself before the judges as an advocate, a witness, or a suitor. He transacted his private affairs with his banker or notary; he perused the public journal of yesterday, and inquired how his friend's cause had sped before the tribunal of the prætor. At every step he crossed the path of some of the notables of his own class, and the news of the day and interests of the hour were discussed between them with dignified politeness.

"Such were the morning occupations of a *dies fastus*, or working day; the holy-day had its appropriate occupation in attendance upon the temple services, in offering a prayer for the safety of the Emperor and people, in sprinkling frankincense on the altar, and, on occasions of special devotion, appeasing the gods with a sacrifice. But all transactions of business, secular or *divine*, ceased at once when the voice of the herald on the steps of the Hostilian Curia proclaimed that the shadow of the sun had passed the line on the pavement before him, which marked the hour of midday.* Every door was now closed; every citizen, at least in summer, plunged into the dark recesses of his sleeping-chamber for the enjoyment of his meridian slumber. The midday siesta terminated, generally speaking, the affairs of the day, and every man was now released from duty and free to devote himself, on rising again, to relaxation or amusement till the return of night. If the Senate had been used sometimes to prolong or renew its sittings, there was a rule that after the tenth hour, or four o'clock, no new business could be brought under its notice, and we are told of Asinius Pollio, that he would not even open a letter after that hour.† Meanwhile Rome had risen again to amuse and recreate itself, and the grave man of business had his amusements as well as the idler of the Forum. The

never within the city. Even beyond the walls it was considered disreputable to hold the reins one's self, such being the occupation of the slave or hired driver. Juvenal ranks the Consul, who creeps out at night to drive his own chariot, with the most degraded of characters; that he should venture to drive by daylight, while still in office, is an excess of turpitude transcending the imagination of the most sarcastic painter of manners as they were. And this was a hundred years later than the age of Augustus. See Juvenal, VIII. 145, foll."

* "I allude to the passage, well known to the topographers, in Pliny, Hist. Nat. VII. 60: Meridies accenso consulum id pronuntiante, quum a curia inter rostra et Græcostasim prospexisset solem. The reader will observe that this refers in strictness to an earlier period, and that the Curia Hostilia was destroyed in the year 52 B. C."

† "Senec. de Tranq. Anim. 15: Quidam nullum non diem inter et otium et curas dividebant; qualem Pollionem Asinium, oratorem magnum, neminimus, quem nulla res ultra decimam retinuit; ne epistolas quidem post eam horam legebat, ne quid novæ curæ nasceretur."

exercises of the Field of Mars were the relaxation of the soldiers of the Republic; and when the urban populace had withdrawn itself from military service, the traditions of the Campus were still cherished by the upper ranks, and the practice of its mimic war confined, perhaps, exclusively to them. The swimming, running, riding, and javelin-throwing of this public ground became, under the Emperors, a fashion of the nobility; * the populace had no taste for such labors, and witnessed perhaps with some surprise the toils to which men voluntarily devoted themselves, who possessed slaves to relieve them from the most ordinary exertions of the day. But the young competitors in these athletic contests were not without a throng of spectators; the porticos which bordered the field were crowded with the elder people and the women, who shunned the heat of the declining sun; many a private dwelling looked upon it from the opposite side of the river, which was esteemed on that account a desirable place of residence. Augustus had promised his favor to every revival of the gallant customs of antiquity, and all the Roman world that lived in his smiles hastened to the scene of these antique amusements to gratify the Emperor, if not to amuse themselves." † — *Ibid.*, pp. 549 – 552.

The day ended with the cœna, or supper, which, according to Mr. Merivale, "deserves to be described as a national institution." It furnished the occasion for friendly meetings, designed equally for the gratification of the body and the mind. In the best days of Rome, indeed, conversation formed one of the chief delights of these festive gatherings, and when this drooped, the guests were invited to listen to recitations in honor of the national heroes. But it must be remembered that there was always a want of refinement in the tastes of the Romans, and with the increase of luxury conversation at table lost much of its original charm. In the time of Augustus the convivial excesses of the nobles had reached a height which may well excite surprise, though those excesses only indicate too faithfully the actual state of public and private morals.

* "See for the exercises of the Campus, Hor. Od. I. 13, Art. Poet. 379."

† "Horace knew how to gratify the Emperor by his frequent allusions to the exercises of the Campus. It is probable that they declined in interest at a subsequent period, and the mention of them becomes comparatively rare. But they still constituted a part of the ordinary occupation of the day in the second century of the Empire (Martial, II. 14, IV. 8), and were not disused in the third. Hist. Aug. in Claud. 13. *Fecerat hoc adolescens in militia quum ludicro Martiali in campo luctamen inter fortissimos quosque celebraret.*"

The citizens then “vied with one another in the cost rather than the elegance of their banquets, and accumulated with absurd pride the rarest and most expensive viands on their boards, to excite the admiration of their parasites, not to gratify their palates.” In the primitive times the Romans had sat at their meals; but afterward they adopted the custom of reclining on low stuffed and cushioned couches, arranged on three sides of the table in such a manner that the slaves in attendance could wait on their master and his guests without incommoding them. The inferiority of the women was shown by placing them together on one of the side couches. When the custom of reclining at table was introduced from Greece, the women and boys were required to sit; and it was not until some time afterward that they were allowed to assume a recumbent position.

Mr. Merivale closes his account of Roman life in the age of Augustus with some remarks on the schools of the rhetoricians, and the habits of declamation which they so industriously cultivated, together with some general observations on the style of the Augustan writers, with special notices of Livy, Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, considered as representative men. The first of these great writers he regards as indifferent to historical accuracy, but as having rendered an important service to his countrymen by “making them acquainted with their ancestors and proud of their descent.” Virgil he considers as an enthusiast, whose special design it was to recommend the government of Augustus to the intellectual portion of the Roman people, by connecting it with the ancient glories of Troy; and to the maintenance of this thesis our author devotes ten or twelve pages. “His ardor in the cause of law, order, and tradition,” we are told, “assumed the character of a religious sentiment, and he conceived himself devoted to a great moral mission.” Horace, too, he asserts, served as an agent of the government in exposing to scorn or ridicule those whose wealth and fondness for display might make them dangerous rivals to Augustus, and in recommending “moderation and contentment to the restless nobles.” In the other three writers he discovers no special political object; and in respect to Tibullus he says, “Throughout his works there is no mention made either of

Augustus or of his ministers and associates." To much of his criticism on the Augustan literature little or no exception can be taken ; but in respect to Virgil and Horace we are inclined to think that he has carried his views too far, and that their writings have not in truth so deep a political significance as he attaches to them. Undoubtedly it is easy to find in each writer many passages to confirm the view so skilfully urged by Mr. Merivale ; but it by no means follows that either poet wrote under the inspiration of a distinct political object, or with the express design of making his writing the buttress of any special form of government.

The family history and domestic relations of Augustus do not afford a pleasing subject of contemplation. For his first two wives, Claudia and Scribonia, he seems to have felt little affection, and both were divorced soon after their marriage. His third wife, Livia Drusilla, was an able, ambitious, and intriguing woman, whose character is drawn in much too favorable colors by Mr. Merivale. His sister Octavia, whose misfortunes, not less than her personal worth, must always command our sympathy, was married to Marcus Antonius ; and the shameless adulteries of her husband, even more than the early death of her son by a previous marriage, threw a thick cloud over her own life, while she was also the victim of Livia's ambitious designs. Julia, the only daughter of Augustus, was three times married, — to Marcellus, Agrippa, and Tiberius ; but her personal character was so profligate, that her father was compelled to banish her from the city. Her two eldest sons by Agrippa died during their grandfather's life, and with them perished the principal hope of transmitting the imperial dignity in the direct line of his own blood, for their younger brother had fallen under his displeasure, and been banished to the rocky island of Planasia in the Tyrrhene Sea. He had, however, adopted as his own the sons of Livia by her first husband, Tiberius Nero and Drusus Claudius Nero, and on the death of Augustus, which occurred on the 19th of August in the year of the city 767, the eldest, Tiberius, who alone survived, succeeded to the vacant honors.

The principate of Tiberius extended over a period of twenty-three years, and may be divided into two nearly equal

parts, the first comprising ten years of tolerably good government, and the second including his worst acts of tyranny and the gross excesses of his long sojourn at Capreæ. In relating the history of this Emperor, Mr. Merivale is inclined, we think, to place his character and acts in as favorable a light as they will bear, without becoming his apologist. The mother of Tiberius doubtless exercised a controlling influence over him during the greater part of her life, and this influence was seldom or never exerted for wise and beneficent ends. Moreover, many of his worst acts may fairly be ascribed to the evil counsels of his favorite Sejanus, while it must also be admitted that there was perhaps a touch of insanity in his moody and perverse mind. But even with the necessary allowance for these extenuating circumstances, it is certain that there was enough in his life to justify the common estimate of his character. The opportune murder of Agrippa Postumus, the only surviving grandson of his predecessor, which was announced only a few days after the accession of Tiberius, was popularly believed to have been perpetrated at his command; and this was only one of many similar occurrences by which the earlier as well as the later part of his principate was marked, and from which he derived such obvious advantage that it is difficult not to believe that they were at least planned by him. His extension of the law of *Majestas* or treason; his encouragement of delation, one of the worst evils of that or of any age; the mystery which he allowed to hang over the death of his nephew, Germanicus; his remorseless treatment of the elder Agrippina while she was living, and his unblushing accusations against her after she had starved herself to death in her island-prison; his persecution of her family and friends; and the savage cruelty of his later years,—all tend to throw light on his real character, and to show that he has not been too harshly judged.

On the death of Augustus he appears to have succeeded to the government by the general consent of all classes, rather than by any direct action of the Senate. “He already possessed,” we are told, “the Imperium, which required no further instrument to give him the control of the legions and provinces; the tribunitian and proconsular power had been

conferred on him on a previous occasion, and the prerogatives of the consular were sufficiently understood without a distinct and formal recognition. The principate was, perhaps, virtually conferred without a special act, by tacitly yielding to him the first voice in the Senate, and the popular suffrage, in which lay the disposal of the chief pontificate, might easily be taken for granted." No one, indeed, supposed for a moment that Tiberius was the most suitable person in the state to wield the powers which Augustus had been slowly accumulating; but he was the adopted son of the late Emperor, and there was no one of the prominent citizens who was either able or willing to come forward as his competitor. At a little later period, when he had still further consolidated the imperial supremacy, opposition and rivalry were equally vain.

During his principate many of the powers of the government which had been intentionally left by Augustus in an undefined state were settled in such a manner as to give increased weight and influence to the Emperor. Of the changes which were thus effected in the constitution, perhaps the most significant was the transfer of the chief functions of the Comitia to the Senate, a body which was more directly under the imperial influence, and was seldom able or willing to assume an attitude of opposition to any of the wishes of the government. By virtue of the powers which were now transferred to the patrician assembly, the plebeians or their representatives had elected certain magistrates, had enacted the laws needed to give effect to the senatorial decrees, and had decided various questions of public and private law. In respect to the first of these functions, it is to be observed that the popular right of election had been restricted to very narrow limits by the first Cæsar, and afterward by the Triumvirs; but Augustus, retaining in his own hands the right of selecting one half of the magistrates, restored to the Tribes the privilege of choosing the others, subject to his veto on the nomination of unworthy candidates. Tiberius carried this reform of the founder of the monarchy still further, and submitted his nominations to the Senate instead of the Comitia, which now met only to accept the nominations of the Senate; and by this change he brought the elections still more directly under his control.

As Mr. Merivale remarks: "From henceforth we are to consider not only that every consular appointment is made by the mere voice of the Emperor, but that every other magistrate is chosen by the Senate, partly upon the imperial nomination, partly with a show of free selection, and, finally, that to these at least the popular sanction is also ostensibly given. The effect of the reform, therefore, is after all not the transfer of any substantial power from the one assembly to the other, but simply an additional ray of pale and doubtful lustre cast upon the laticlave of the Senator." The popular right of choosing the various officers of the state, which was thus virtually abolished, had never been disputed under the Republic; but the authority of the legislative enactments of the Plebs had never been willingly conceded, and the Senate had constantly labored to establish the independence of its own legislative power. With the lapse of time the senatorial encroachments on the popular privileges increased in importance, and the Senators began at length to claim the right of annulling the resolutions of the Comitia; and we have already seen that, in the case of Augustus and his step-sons, they unhesitatingly exercised a dispensing power in regard to two at least of the fundamental laws. Augustus, however, in accordance with his conservative policy, steadily upheld the legislative power of the Plebs; but under Tiberius it was practically withdrawn from them: and we are told that "two instances only are known of *Leges* passed in the regular course under his administration, while the *Consulta* of the Senate are sufficiently numerous." The loss of these two privileges was doubtless a serious blow to the popular element in the government; but the loss of the criminal jurisdiction of the Tribes was still more significant of the change which was gradually taking place in the relations of the people and the Emperor. Perhaps the most important feature of this jurisdiction was the right of the popular assemblies to determine appeals in capital cases. This right, however, was really extinguished when Augustus reserved to himself the final decision in all cases; and the other judicial rights of the Comitia had practically fallen into abeyance at a somewhat earlier period by the institution of the *Questiones Perpetuæ*, or standing courts of justice, though their

existence had hitherto remained unquestioned. But under the first and second Emperors, many of the judicial rights which had thus been withdrawn from the people were transferred to the Senate, so that from the time of Tiberius that body "may be described as a High Court of Criminal Jurisdiction of the most comprehensive kind," but virtually under the control of the Emperor himself. By these changes the most important rights which the people had possessed under the Republic were transferred nominally to the Senate, but really to the Emperor; and "henceforth," as Mr. Merivale remarks, "it depended upon the personal character of the chief of the state whether the government of Rome assumed or not the appearance of that autocratic despotism which it really was, however the fact might be disguised."

Beside these fundamental changes some other modifications were introduced into the laws, and some new enactments were framed, which still further consolidated the imperial power; but they need not detain us here, and we pass to the only remaining topic connected with the internal condition of the Empire under Tiberius, to which we can now refer,—his encouragement of delation. Originally the delator was a person who gave notice of moneys that had become due to the imperial treasury, but afterward the signification of the term was extended so as to include any person who gave information of a crime punishable by a fine. When Augustus undertook to enforce his stringent laws on the subject of marriage, numerous persons were employed as informers to search out those who violated the laws. Soon delation became an extensive and profitable trade, "the broad and beaten path of a crafty ambition," and under Tiberius, especially in his later years, it was diligently encouraged. Of the origin and progress of this tremendous evil, which more than anything else brought obloquy on the second Emperor, Mr. Merivale gives a vigorous and masterly sketch, which we venture to cite, notwithstanding its length.

"But this infamous practice," he says, "became so marked a feature in Roman society, and affected so painfully the imaginations of the people, that it will be well to spend a few moments here in depicting to ourselves its action more widely. We must trace it back, like

every other pest of the imperial times, to its first origin under the Republic, when the evil inherent in its principle was disguised or even ennobled by loftier aims, and by the freshness of its growth in an atmosphere of freedom. The liberty of the Roman citizen, the prime jewel of his existence, was to be maintained at any price. It was maintained by a system of universal terrorism. Every citizen was invited to watch over the conduct of his compatriots, and to menace every deviation from the path of civil virtue with a public accusation. Every young noble was trained in the art of pleading, partly to enable him, when his own turn came, to defend himself, but primarily to furnish him with weapons of offence, and thereby with the means of self-advancement. Rhetoric was an instrument of power, by which he might expect to make himself admired by the people, and feared by competitors of his own class. He fought his way to public honors on the floor of the law-courts, dragging successively from their benches the tribunes, the prætors, and the consuls, before whom he first began his career of eloquence. The intrigues and treasons of the men in power did not always suffice to furnish victims for this mania of impeachment: it was necessary to extend the inquisition into the provinces, and summon before the bar of Roman opinion the governors who had sinned, if not against the laws of the Republic, against those at least of humanity and justice. To interest the citizens, to inflame their passions, to bias their judgments on the subject of crimes thus perpetrated on remote provincials, required a great accession of eloquence and art; but the genius and industry of the young advocates and their teachers kept pace with every demand upon them. Feelings of party were appealed to in the place of genuine patriotism. The truth of the accusation was found to be of little importance; it was the great triumph of the rhetorician, not unfrequently gained, to baffle and trample down the interests of a political faction, without regard to the intrinsic merits of the case. The young orator, who at the age of nineteen or twenty years could sway the votes of a bench of judges against some veteran proconsul, grown gray in the service of the state, was marked as sure to rise to the highest political eminence.* The energy and aggressive spirit of the Romans was ever conspicuous in the toga no less than in the sagum; they preferred the attack to the defence in the forum as well as in the field.

“It was the glory of Cicero that he abstained in his early career, while yet his fame was to be acquired, from this common routine of

* “Thus Crassus maintained an accusation at nineteen years, Cæsar at twenty-one, Pollio at twenty-two. Tac. de Orat. 34; Quintil. Inst. XII. 6. On this subject see some brilliant paintings in Champagny's Césars, I. 236.”

prosecution, and sought the less dazzling career of a pleader for the accused. Yet in the most glowing of his effusions, both in public and personal causes, he appears as the assailant, and neither humanity nor policy prevent him from declaring himself the enemy of the man against whom he seeks to enlist the prejudices of his hearers.* The Romans made no scruple of avowing their personal animosities; the spirit of revenge with them was a virtue which a man would affect if he had it not.† In the heart of the Roman, friendship occupied the place of love; it was invested with a sanctity and solemnity of obligation which approached almost to chivalry; but the reaction from it was an enmity not less deeply felt nor less solemnly pronounced; the foe was not less devoted than the friend.‡ Neither shame, therefore, nor humanity interfered to check this passion for accusation, in which the Romans were to the full as unscrupulous and unfeeling, though dealing with their own countrymen, as they were in invading the lands of the foreigner. This fearful vice was gilded under the free state by the splendor of the objects to which it was directed, the magnitude of the interests involved, and the abilities and powers of the giants it summoned to the contest.§ In the atmosphere of liberty it called many corresponding virtues into action; it produced on the whole one of the highest manifestations of human nature, and, taking the good with the evil, we may not perhaps be entitled to regret the existence which was permitted to it. But for the same vice, as it appeared under the Empire, no such excuse can be offered. Then, too, as soon as the young

* "There are some curious passages in the speech *de Provinciis Consularibus*, in which Cicero excuses himself for seeming to waive his notorious hostility to Cæsar: 8. *Me communis utilitatis habere rationem non doloris mei.* 18. *Accepi injuriam; inimicus esse debui; non nego.* 20. *Hoc tempore reipublicæ consulere, inimicitias in aliud tempus reservare deberem.*"

† "Tac. *de Orat.* 36. *Assignatæ domibus inimicitia.* 40. *Jus potentissimum quemque vexandi, atque ipsa inimicitiarum gloria.* Hist. II. 53: *Ut novus adhuc, et in senatum nuper ascitus, magnis inimiciis clarescent.* Champagny, I. p. 237."

‡ "The Duel, the legitimate descendant of private warfare, could have no place in Roman society, which regarded man as the citizen only, an unit in the body corporate. Personal violence was prohibited by law, and even carrying arms was interdicted. The *Cut*, the resource of sullenness and shyness, is, I believe, a strictly English institution; and the formal renunciation of friendship was the last resource of outraged feeling among the Romans. Thus Germanicus sends Piso a solemn declaration that their friendship is at an end. Tiberius forbids Labeo his house. Tac. Ann. VI. 29. *Morem fuisse majoribus, quoties dirimerent amicitias, interdicere domo, eumque finem gratiæ ponere.* In reply to the common apology for the duel, that it prevents assassination, it may be remarked, that assassination was almost unknown to a late period among the Romans."

§ "The reader should refer to the passage of Tacitus *de Orat.* 34–37, one of the most interesting in ancient literature."

patrician had quitted the schools of the declaimers, he longed to make a trial of his accomplishments, and sought an object on which to flesh the maiden sword of his eloquence. There were no longer party interests into which to throw himself; the class of intriguing politicians no longer existed, whose attempts against the liberties of the commonwealth demanded his vigilance and invited his exposure; the provinces, administered at last on settled principles, and kept under the eye of the central government, afforded still some, but much rarer, cases of public wrong to denounce and avenge. What remained, then, for the young aspirant to do? How exercise the gifts he had so long been fostering in private, and ventilate in the common air the talents to which schools and saloons had accorded such inspiring acclamations? The progress of special legislation, diverted as it was from the public to the private career of the Roman, entering into his dwelling, and penetrating the recesses of his home-life, gave birth to manifold modes of transgression and evasion, such as the prying eyes of a domestic spy alone could track. The government, which might despair of vindicating its authority by the exertions of its own officers, was grateful to the passion for forensic distinction which now urged the aspirant for fame to drag to light every petty violation of every frivolous enactment. According to the spirit of Roman criminal procedure, the informer and the pleader were one and the same person. There was no public accuser to manage the prosecution for the government on information from whatever sources derived; but the spy who discovered the delinquency was himself the man to demand of the Senate, the prætor, or the judge an opportunity of proving it by his own eloquence or ingenuity. The odium of prosecution was thus removed from the government to the private delator; an immense advantage to a rule of force which pretended to be popular. The common right of accusation, the birthright of the Roman citizen, the palladium, so esteemed, of Roman freedom, became thus the most convenient instrument of despotism. But however odious such a profession might generally make itself, whatever the infamy to which it would be consigned by posterity, those who practised it reaped the reward they sought in money and celebrity, in influence and authority, in the favor of the prince, and not rarely in the applause of the multitude. They could wreak their malice upon their private enemies under the guise of zeal for the public service; they might gratify the worst of passions, and exult, under the shadow of the imperial tyranny, in the exercise of a tyranny hardly less omnipotent of their own. The social corruption such a state of things produced grew fast and rankly, and is marked by the swift progress of the contagion from the first raw and ignoble professors to men of real distinction in

the state. Beginning with youths fresh from school, or the teachers of rhetoric themselves, it soon spread to magistrates and consulars, and many of the most illustrious statesmen of the early Empire were notorious for their addiction to this meanest and most debasing of vices."—Vol. V. pp. 166–172.

It is one of the worst features of the reign of Tiberius, that he encouraged this detestable practice, until it grew to such an extent that it could no longer be controlled; and in the latter half of his principate delation was one of the most efficient means of destroying any man on whom the imperial suspicion fell. Real or imaginary offences were paraded as the ground of accusation by the delator, and an upright character or great public services were of little avail against the influence which could at any moment be thrown into the adverse scale. The last ten years of this reign form one of the worst periods of Roman history. Secluded from the public gaze in the island of Capreæ, not far from the spot where Naples now stands, Tiberius led an idle and dissolute life, and was felt at Rome only as an absent tyrant, who took little or no thought of the welfare of the Empire, but who was ever ready to crush those whom he feared or hated. On this little island he erected as many as twelve different villas, named after the greater gods, and, surrounding himself with Greek professors, with sooth-sayers, astrologers, and the like, he was believed by his contemporaries to pass his time in the foulest debaucheries and the most sanguinary cruelties. But whether this belief was founded in fact or not, it is certain that from the date of his withdrawal to Capreæ there was a marked deterioration in his government; and that the murders which are directly chargeable to him inspired a wide-spread and deeply-seated terror in all classes. The announcement of his death must have been a relief to many, even though it was supposed that he perished by the hand of his successor. This statement, however, was sustained by no satisfactory evidence, and if we take into consideration his advanced years, seventy-eight, we need not hesitate to accept the common belief that his death was occasioned by natural causes. He died on the 16th of March, in the year of the city 790.

Tiberius was succeeded by his grand-nephew, Caius, com-

monly called Caligula, the son of Germanicus and the elder Agrippina. The new Emperor began his principate under favorable auspices, and his first acts were liberal and politic. He made large gifts to the citizens and soldiers, granted a general pardon to the prisoners of state and recalled from banishment those who were in exile, publicly burned the informations against his mother and his elder brothers, at the same time declaring that he had not ascertained the names of the delators by whom they had been accused, expelled from Rome the worst instruments of his predecessor's despotism, restored to circulation the writings which had been suppressed by the Senate, and published an account of the imperial expenditures in accordance with the practice of Augustus. But the hopes inspired by this early promise were bitterly disappointed. After a few months of assiduous devotion to business he rushed into the wildest excesses of dissipation. "The games of the circus were continued with occasional interludes," we are told, "through the whole twelve hours of the day; and on special festivals the arena was strewn with cinabar and borax, and the chariots driven by none under the rank of a Senator. But even these follies were less criminal than the vices and sensualities to which they led the way." A severe illness which occurred about this time has been charitably supposed to have permanently affected his mind; and it is certain that after his recovery the worst features in his character were more than ever conspicuous. One of the first acts by which his restoration to health was marked was to cause the young grandson of Tiberius to be privately despatched; and this was only the first in a long series of similar atrocities. Delation was found to be too costly a means of ridding the Emperor of his enemies, since the informers naturally demanded a part of the confiscated estates of their victims; and accordingly Caius substituted the less expensive but equally efficient method of commanding the person whose death he desired to commit suicide. Whenever this expedient failed, the papers of Tiberius, which he had pretended to destroy unopened, afforded all the desired evidence; and it was generally sufficient to allege that the victim had been an accomplice of Sejanus, the detested favor-

ite of Tiberius, or that he had been an enemy to the family of Germanicus, whose popularity with the common people was largely reflected on all who were connected with him by blood or friendship. Added to this, a systematic persecution of the rich nobles was begun and carried forward with remorseless activity, while the Emperor's narrowness of mind was shown by numerous little acts of tyranny. Thus he caused the statues of the heroes of the Republic which Augustus had set up to be thrown down and broken in pieces, forbade the last collateral descendant of the great Pompeius to bear the surname of Magnus, commanded the works of Virgil and Livy to be withdrawn from the public libraries, saying that the first had neither genius nor learning, and that the second was a mere careless blunderer, proposed to abolish the institution of the jurisconsults, and even threatened to repeal every existing enactment throughout the Empire, and make his own will the sole law. Nor was this all. Having by his follies and his tyranny alienated the nobles who had at first welcomed his accession as a relief from the gloomy despotism of Tiberius, he next destroyed his popularity with the common people by laying on them a load of taxation which neither of his predecessors would have dared to impose. The Romans had always been jealous and impatient of taxation in any form, and, when Caius imposed new taxes in order to replenish his exhausted treasury, the popular indignation at once made itself felt. "The citizens," says Mr. Merivale, "refused to follow in the theatre his signal to applaud or condemn: they beheld with indifference the feats of the imperial athlete himself; the shows and games, which they had regarded almost as their daily food, ceased at last to attract them; and it was probably in vexation at this sullen yet passive disobedience, which baffled both his menaces and caresses, that he uttered his well-known exclamation, accompanied no doubt with the significant gesture by which he intimated his cruel will to his headsmen, *Would that the people of Rome had but one neck!*"

It was natural that a principate characterized by such acts should witness more than one conspiracy against the head of the government. Caius had enjoyed the supreme power only

two years when, according to the account which he himself caused to be circulated, a conspiracy was formed by Æmilius Lepidus, in concert with the Emperor's two sisters, the younger Agrippina and Livilla, for the overthrow of the government. The conspiracy was discovered; its leaders were executed; and the sisters were sent into banishment; but the spirit of opposition was not crushed. In the following year another conspiracy, headed by Cerialis, was discovered, and broken up; and not many months afterward, a third and more successful conspiracy was formed by Cassius Chærea, the tribune of a prætorian cohort, who had experienced some personal affronts from Caius. The period fixed for its execution was the week devoted to the celebration of the Palatine games. It was not, however, until the fifth and last day of the festival that the conspirators were able to summon resolution enough to strike the fatal blow. On the evening of that day, the 24th of January, in the year of the city 794, Caius was stabbed to death in one of the vaulted passages of his palace by Chærea and Sabinus, another prætorian tribune. The Emperor was in his thirtieth year, and had reigned only four years.

Immediately after the assassination of Caius, the Senate was called together by the Consuls, to decide the question of succession; "but while they deliberated," to adopt the striking phrase of Gibbon, "the prætorian guards had resolved." The person whose cause they had espoused was Tiberius Claudius Drusus, a native of Lyons, but connected by marriage with the Cæsar family, and uncle of the late Emperor. During the confusion which followed the murder of Caius, he had concealed himself behind a curtain in an obscure corner of the palace. Here he was discovered by some of the prætorians, who were plundering the deserted rooms, and who bore him off, half dead with fright, to their camp; but instead of inflicting on him the death which he anticipated, they hailed him as Imperator, and gathering around him urged him to accept the throne. Gradually recovering his courage, he permitted them to swear allegiance to him, and even promised them large gifts of money as the price of their fidelity. Meanwhile, the Senate, finding that Claudius was likely to become a formidable competitor for the vacant principate, and to be supported by a numerous body

of veteran troops, determined to yield to a necessity which they could not surmount, and accepted the despised Claudius as Emperor. By these occurrences the prætorians gained an influence in the state which they never afterward lost. The precedent which Claudius first set by the purchase of their support was never suffered to be forgotten.

Claudius was a person of very limited intellect, and though his principate extended over a period of thirteen years, it need not detain us long. His education had been scandalously neglected, and his bodily and mental infirmities alike concurred to withdraw him from all knowledge of public affairs in his early years; and when he came to the throne he was entirely under the influence of the women by whom he was surrounded and of his freedmen. His first two wives were divorced not long after his marriage, one on account of an intrigue with a freedman, the other for some minor offence. His next wife, the youthful Messalina, was a woman of the most notorious profligacy, and though Mr. Merivale is inclined to think that her vices have been exaggerated, and that some allowance must be made on account of her youth, her name has descended to our time as one of the most expressive synonymes of immorality. His fourth and last wife was the younger Agrippina, a woman of greater ability but of scarcely less infamous character, who, after many intrigues to deprive her husband's son of the succession in order to secure it for her own offspring, finally set the seal on her atrocities by poisoning Claudius five years after their marriage. The freedmen of the palace were not less dissolute and cruel than these women, and in any candid estimate of the principate of Claudius, the defects of his education, his mental weakness, and the character of the persons who so largely controlled his movements, must not be lost from sight.

If their proper weight is allowed to these extenuating circumstances, the general accuracy of Mr. Merivale's portraiture of Claudius must be conceded, and we shall be inclined to take a more favorable view of this feeble and wretched sovereign than has often been entertained. Many of his measures indeed were judicious and liberal, and he seems to have been animated in many instances by a desire to follow in the footsteps of the

great man whose wise and moderate views had given its early stability to the imperial government. As our author well remarks, in speaking of the impression which the numerous busts of this Emperor are likely to produce, —

“If his figure, as we are told, was tall, and when sitting appeared not ungraceful, his face, at least in repose, was eminently handsome. But it is impossible not to remark in it an expression of pain and anxiety which forcibly arrests our sympathy. It is the face of an honest and well-meaning man, who feels himself unequal to the task imposed upon him. There is the look of perplexity in which he may have pored over the mysteries of Etruscan lore, carried to the throne of the world, and engaged in the deepest problems of finance and citizenship. There is the expression of fatigue, both of the mind and body, which speaks of midnight watches over books, varied with midnight carousals at the imperial table, and the fierce caresses of rival mistresses. There is the glance of fear, not of open enemies, but of pretended friends; the reminiscence of wanton blows, and the anticipation of the deadly potion. Above all, there is the anxious glance of dependence, which seems to cast about for a model to imitate, for ministers to shape a policy, and for satellites to execute it. The model Claudius found was the policy of the venerated Augustus; but his ministers were the most profligate of women, and the most selfish of emancipated slaves. This imitation of the measures of the great founder of the Empire is indeed the key to the whole public policy of the Claudian principate. Both at home and abroad we shall find the new ruler of Rome following the lines already traced by his illustrious ancestor.” — *Ibid.*, pp. 486, 487.

The military operations of the Empire were carried on with vigor and success, and some additions were made to the territory which acknowledged the Roman sway; new colonies were founded, and fresh life was infused into those which had been previously planted; the list of Senators was revised, and purged of all who were unfit to sit in that august assembly, or who did not possess the requisite means to enable them to support the dignity in a becoming manner, and the vacancies were then filled from the richest families in the provinces; the equestrian order was also scrutinized with a similar view, and new men were called to its ranks; measures were adopted to restore or increase the influence of the national religion by limiting the number of feasts and holidays, and by regulating the foreign cults, which might prove dangerous to the state; unexampled

patience and diligence were exhibited by the Emperor in listening to the appeals which, from time to time, were brought before him as the supreme fountain of justice ; and magnificent works were undertaken to facilitate the importation of foreign corn, and to render large tracts of valuable land fit for cultivation, such as the opening of the *Portus Romanus* near Ostia, and the cutting of an outlet to the Lake *Fucinus*. Such acts as these would have entitled his name to an honorable place in the Roman annals, if there had been no reverse to the picture ; and as it is, his principate must stand in favorable contrast with that of *Caius*, on the one hand, and with that of his successor, *Nero*, on the other.

This monster of cruelty and vice owed his elevation to the ambitious machinations of his mother, the younger *Agrippina*, and he soon showed that he had inherited the worst traits of her infamous character. The first five years of his principate, called by the historians and jurists the "*Quinquennium Neronis*," were characterized, it is true, by many popular acts, and they were among the famous periods of good government to which the later Romans delighted to look back ; but when the boy had once cut clear from his tutor *Seneca*, and could choose his own counsellors, the inherent defects of his character, which no education could eradicate, showed themselves with fearful violence. One of the first acts of his principate was an unsuccessful attempt to poison the child *Britannicus*, the only surviving son of the late Emperor ; and when the first attempt failed, he caused a second draught to be administered in his own presence. His next conspicuous victim was his own mother, *Agrippina*, with whom he had quarrelled in order to free himself from her hated control. The first attempt to destroy her was also unsuccessful, and she was accordingly assassinated in her own house by one of the Emperor's officers ; and in a letter which he addressed shortly afterward to the Senate, he had the indecency to describe her death as a public benefit, and to attribute to her influence many of the worst acts of *Claudius*. Three years after the murder of his mother he caused his wife, *Octavia*, the daughter of his predecessor, to be despatched, in order to gratify the jealousy of the rival who had supplanted her. A long catalogue of noble or

obscure victims followed these three members of his own family, and the stream of blood continued to flow until his own death put an end to his enormities. But it is not for his savage cruelty alone that Nero holds a bad pre-eminence in history. After these early murders his licentiousness became as reckless as his disregard of life.

“He had sunk already,” says Mr. Merivale, “to the degradation of singing and playing in public; but there was still a lower depth which his abandoned tastes and thirst for vulgar admiration tempted him to fathom. As a child his talk had been of the greens and blues; his counters had been cars of ivory. The passion, checked by his preceptors, had been cherished up to manhood, and since he had become his own master he had thrown off gradually all restraint in indulging it. From his private circus in the gardens of the Vatican, from the arena of Grecian colonies in Campania, he descended at last to the Circus Maximus at Rome, and, placing a freedman in the imperial tribune to fling the kerchief for a signal, drove his chariot victoriously round the goal, before the eyes of two hundred thousand citizens. The rabble greeted him with delight; so soon had they forgotten Octavia; so heedless were they of the shame of their country. The Senators clapped their hands reluctantly, shuddering the while at the downfall of ancient principles, and trembling, at every shout, for their own lives and fortunes.” — Vol. VI. p. 153.

He first introduced the custom of dining in public; and the populace were invited to witness the spectacle of gluttony and intoxication which was thus shamelessly paraded before them. Nor was this all, or even the worst; and “whatever allowance,” says our author, “we may make for the indignant exaggerations of later moralists, or for the prurient imaginations of the narrators, it seems impossible to question the fact of the prostitution he encouraged, ordered, and even compelled.” It was in the midst of these excesses that the most memorable event of his principate — the conflagration of Rome — occurred. Of this fire Mr. Merivale has given an animated and picturesque account, which is made doubly interesting by his intimate acquaintance with the topography of ancient Rome, but we have left to ourselves no room to cite the passage. By the common people the origin of the fire was ascribed to the command of the Emperor, and it was believed that from the

towers of his villa at Antium he had gazed on the magnificent spectacle, while he amused himself by chanting "The Sack of Troy" to his own accompaniment on the lyre. It was probably to avert suspicion from himself that he began that terrible persecution of the little company of foreigners "to whom the vulgar gave the name of Christians," which Tacitus has described in a familiar passage of the *Annals*.

The destruction of Rome, and the taxes and confiscations to which Nero had recourse in order to defray the expense of rebuilding the city on a new and more magnificent scale, proved fatal to whatever remained of his early popularity. A deep-seated discontent began to show itself, which at length ripened into a conspiracy headed by C. Calpurnius Piso, a man of rare ability, of great wealth, and of a generous temper, who was, moreover, the representative of one of the most illustrious families in Rome. The conspiracy, however, was discovered before its purpose could be executed; and the conspirators themselves, among whom was the poet Lucan, were convicted and put to death. But soon a more formidable blow fell from another quarter. The discontent which had been partially crushed out in Rome reappeared in the provinces with increased vigor; and in the year of the city 821 the armies of Spain and Germany hailed their respective commanders, Servius Sulpicius Galba and Virginius Rufus as Imperator. At the same time the Prefect of Farther Gaul, C. Julius Vindex, was also eager to raise the standard of revolt, though with no view to his own aggrandizement, and at least two other aspirants for the imperial dignity appeared in other parts of the Empire. Virginius refused the perilous honor which his soldiers were eager to thrust upon him, but entered into negotiations with Galba. Nero was at Naples when he received the first tidings of the revolt of Vindex, and treated the news with contempt, even expressing pleasure at the prospect of new confiscations. But when he became fully aware of the extent of the danger, he lost all his courage, and even fainted at the news of the subsequent revolt of Virginius. He returned to Rome, and made some show of resistance; but after the most pitiful exhibition of pusillanimity he fled from the city without daring to face his enemies, and, taking refuge in the house

of one of his freedmen, caused himself to be put to death by a slave.

"Nero perished on the 9th of June, 821," says our historian, "at the age of thirty years and six months, in the fourteenth year of his principate.* The child borne him by Poppæa had died in infancy, and a subsequent marriage with Statilia Messalina had proved unfruitful.† The stock of the Julii, refreshed in vain by grafts from the Octavii, the Claudii, and the Domitii, had been reduced to his single person, and with Nero the adoptive race of the great dictator was extinguished. The first of the Cæsars had married four times, the second thrice, the third twice, the fourth thrice again, the fifth six times, and, lastly, the sixth thrice also. Of these repeated unions, a large number had borne offspring, yet no descendants of them survived. A few had lived to old age, many reached maturity, some were cut off by early sickness, the end of others was premature and mysterious; but of the whole number a large proportion, which it would be tedious to calculate, were victims of domestic jealousy and politic assassination. Such was the price paid by the usurper's family for their splendid inheritance; but the people accepted it in exchange for internal troubles and promiscuous bloodshed; and though they too had their sacrifices to make, though many noble trees were stripped of their branches under the Cæsars as starkly as the Cæsars themselves, yet order and prosperity had reigned generally throughout the Empire; the world had enjoyed a breathing time of a hundred years, to prepare it for the outbreak of civil commotion, for the fiercer frenzy of international warfare, which are next to be related. With Nero we bid farewell to the Cæsars; at the same time we bid farewell to the state of things which the Cæsars created and maintained. We turn over a page in Roman history. On the verge of a new epoch we would treat with grave respect even the monster with whom the old epoch closes: we may think it well that the corpse even of Nero was unmutilated; that he was buried decently in the Domitian gardens on the Pincian; that though the people evinced a thoughtless triumph at his death, as if it promised them a freedom which

* "The day was said to be the anniversary of the death of Ætavia. Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* I. 52, calculates Nero's life at thirty years five months and twenty-six days, counting from December 15, 790, to June 9, 821; his reign at thirteen years seven months and twenty-eight days."

† "The death of Poppæa had been quickly followed by Nero's marriage with Statilia Messalina, granddaughter of Statilius Taurus, with whom he had previously intrigued, having procured the death of her husband, Atticus Vestinus, during his consulship, to obtain her. *Suet. Ner.* 35; *Tac. Ann.* XV. 68, 69. The consulship and execution of Vestinus are placed in the year 818, while Poppæa was still alive. We hear no more of Statilia, except that she survived the Emperor."

they could neither use nor understand, some unknown hands were found to strew flowers on his sepulchre, and the rival king of Parthia adjured the Senate to do honor to his memory." * — *Ibid.*, pp. 358, 359.

As soon as the death of Nero was known, the Senate was called together, and after a little hesitation the election of Galba was confirmed. Before the close of the year 821 the new sovereign entered the city and assumed the imperial functions; but into the history of his brief principate we do not propose to enter. Passing over the next thirty years, which include the principates of seven Emperors, — Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, and Nerva, — we come now to Trajan, the greatest of the Antonine or Flavian Cæsars.

M. Ulpianus Trajanus was of somewhat obscure origin, but he had early risen to distinction, and in the latter part of the reign of Nerva he was associated in the imperial dignity. On the death of the aged Emperor he succeeded to the undivided authority in Rome. He was then in his forty-fifth year, and in the full vigor of manhood; and his reign, which lasted nineteen years, was the best and most brilliant period which the Empire had seen since the death of Augustus. The splendor of his military achievements is still attested by the stately column which he erected at Rome to commemorate his victories over the Dacians. But these victories did not constitute his only claim to the gratitude of his countrymen; he built for the use of the citizens of Rome the Ulpian forum, which covered a greater area than those of Julius, Augustus, and Nerva together, "while the open area of the old Roman forum might have been contained within the precincts of the Ulpian basilica alone"; erected a new theatre in the Campus Martius; constructed new public baths; added a tenth aqueduct to the means of supplying the city with water; increased the accommodations of the Circus Maximus; formed a harbor at Ancona for the use of his ships, and built the mole which still protects the port of Civita Vecchia; repaired the great highways of the Empire, and reformed the

* "Suet. Ner. 50. 57: Missis ad senatum literis magno opere oravit, ut Neronis memoria coleretur. It is interesting to learn that the tyrant's obsequies were performed by two nurses of his infancy, and by Acte, the partner of his first excesses ten years before."

postal system; systematized the grants to orphans and the children of the poor; took efficient measures to secure a constant and regular supply of corn from the provinces; scrupulously upheld the dignity of the Senate; administered justice in a spirit of clemency; and by many other acts characteristic of a wise and moderate policy acquired a reputation among his contemporaries which none of his predecessors had achieved since the days of the first Emperor. It is commonly believed, indeed, that he suffered, if he did not direct, a general persecution of the Christians; but the evidence in support of this charge is justly regarded by Mr. Merivale as insufficient, though he admits that it is difficult to reject the uniform tradition of the Church. Trajan's conquest of the Dacians is his greatest military achievement, but at a later period he undertook an expedition to the East, which resulted in the annexation of the Greater and the Lesser Armenia to the Empire, and he even carried his victorious arms across the Tigris to the shores of the Persian Gulf. In returning to Rome he was seized with a violent illness, and died at Selinus in Cilicia, early in August, 870, after a principate of nineteen years, "the first of the Cæsars who had met his death at a distance from Rome and Italy, the first whose life had been cut short in the actual service of his country."

Beside the grounds of popularity which we have already mentioned, Trajan was a munificent patron of literature, and Mr. Merivale has, therefore, wisely connected with his account of this principate a chapter on the state of literature during the Flavian period, with notices of Tacitus, the elder and the younger Pliny, Suetonius, Juvenal, Martial, and some other writers of the age. In the main, this survey of the intellectual and moral condition of the Empire is executed with the same ability which is shown in the similar chapters on the state of literature and society in the age of Augustus, though both here and in other parts of his History our author renders scant justice to Tacitus, and in some other respects his views invite criticism. Without attempting to follow him through these observations, we venture to cite a single passage, in which he speaks of the want of a critical spirit in the historical writings of the Romans.

"It was under great disadvantages," he says, "as regarded his materials, that Tacitus compiled the annals of the Cæsars; but there was another obstacle to a true portraiture of the times, in the want of a critical spirit, common to his age, and indeed generally prevalent in the best periods of Roman literature. The Romans were carefully trained to precision in style; they enjoyed the use of a literary language which acknowledged but one dialect; the inflections and syntax of the Latin tongue were the same, wherever spoken by men of education, from the Tagus to the Euphrates. It is commonly said, indeed, that the Latin language is adapted only to a limited range of subjects; but there is surely a fallacy in this remark. The subjects to which it was actually applied within the classical period are limited in number and character, and, accordingly, classical authority is wanting for forms and phrases invented in later times to meet the expansion of the human intellect: but with due allowance for such necessary modifications, it may be said of Latin that no vehicle of thought has, in fact, been more widely or variously employed. Latin has been, and still often is, adopted as the means of communication on themes of moral and natural science, of philosophy and religion, of mathematics and poetry, of law, history, and oratory.* All these subjects and others may still be treated, throughout the civilized world, in that comprehensive dialect which was spoken by Cicero and Tacitus, which has never ceased to be read and written for two thousand years. It combines precision with terseness, strength with grace, expressiveness with fluency, beyond, as I believe, any other language; and it was upon these qualities, accordingly, that the minds of the Romans were fixed, and to the attainment of these their efforts were directed.† They became, almost without exception, as far as their remains allow us to judge, the most accurate speakers and writers of any people in the world. No ingenuity can reduce to the logic of syntax all the eccentricities of Æschylus and Thucydides among the Greeks, while of the best of our own classics there are few, perhaps, that do not abound in grammatical solecisms. But the acutest criticism can hardly detect a flaw in the idioms of Cicero or Livy, Virgil or Hor-

* "Comp. Cicero, *De fin. bon. et mal.* I. 3: 'Non est omnino hic docendi locus: sed ita sentio, Latinam linguam non modo non inopem, ut vulgo putant, sed locupletiore etiam esse quam Græcam. Quando enim nobis, vel dicam aut oratoribus bonis, aut poetis, postea quidem quam fuit quod imitarentur, ullus orationis vel copiosæ vel elegantis, ornatus defuit?'"

† Seneca contrasts (*Consol. ad Polyb.* 21) the force of the Latin with the gracefulness of the Greek language: 'quamdiu steterit aut Latinæ linguæ potentia, aut Græcæ gratia'; and the contrast is no doubt generally just. It may be observed, further, that in his time the full elegance of Latin had not yet been developed by the writers of the Flavian period."

ace, and even the most careless of the Latin poets and historians can rarely be convicted of an error in construction. It is curious, however, to observe how this habitual accuracy deserted the Romans, when they came to dwell on the substance of things instead of the outward modes of expression. To the value of a critical examination of facts they seem to have been almost insensible. Destitute of our mechanical means of verification by notes and references, the use they make of their authorities is correspondingly loose and trivial. The historian, who was not required to guard every statement by clear and direct testimonies, was easily led to read carelessly, to quote from memory, and at random. Conscious that he could not be followed to his sources, and convicted of misusing them, he could scarcely resist the temptation to pervert or gloss the truth. Falsehoods advanced for the credit of the nation or of particular families met with ready indulgence; the habit of falsification, once acquired, could not be kept within the bounds ostensibly prescribed; rhetorical amplifications slid swiftly into direct misstatements; the reputation of a great name gave currency to a lie; the critics of the age of Quintilian, the great age of Roman criticism, lynx-eyed in detecting the abuse of a figure of rhetoric or grammar, lacked the training required for the correction of an error in fact, or for weighing evidence. Roman criticism might be the tact of a spectator in the circus, but it was not the acumen of a judge on the tribunal." — Vol. VII. pp. 305 – 308.

Trajan was succeeded by his kinsman, Publius Ælius Hadrianus, whose principate of twenty-one years, though less brilliant and aggressive than that of his predecessor, was nevertheless characterized by munificence in the erection of works of public utility and ornament, and by an honest endeavor to correct the various evils under which the citizens suffered, either at Rome or in the provinces. One of his first acts was to relinquish the conquests of Trajan in order that he might more certainly secure the safety of the Empire, and his progress through the provinces was doubtless inspired in large measure by a desire to judge for himself as to their actual condition and wants. His early education had been conducted with greater care than that of any of his predecessors, and while still a youth he gave abundant evidence of his quickness of intellect and variety of attainments. At the same time his acquaintance with affairs tended to check any pedantic habits and modes of thought which he might otherwise

have formed. Under these advantages his rise was rapid, and even before the death of Trajan he was popularly designated as his kinsman's successor. This popular choice, it is said, was confirmed by the Emperor on his death-bed; and both the Senate and the army acquiesced in his elevation to the vacant throne. Soon after his accession he began his tour of inspection through the provinces, everywhere leaving proofs of his cautious policy, his liberal views, and his love of letters; and it was not until the year 887 of the city, four years before his death, that he finally returned to Rome, and began to restore and beautify it after the fashion of his predecessors.

"At Rome," says Mr. Merivale, "we behold in him the busy and earnest administrator, surveying from the centre of his vast dominions the character and conduct of his subordinates, keeping all his instruments well in hand, assiduous in selecting the best agents, and strict in requiring an account of their agency, putting to use the local and personal knowledge acquired by so many years of travel and inspection. Amidst this unceasing round of occupation, it was his recreation to behold the glorious buildings still rising at his command in every quarter of the city. It is almost wearisome to turn again and again to the subject of the imperial architecture, which has formed a feature in the narrative of almost every reign in succession; but we are bound to remark, that the edifices of Hadrian at Rome surpassed in magnificence all the works of his predecessors.* His temple of Rome and Venus, with its double cells, placed fantastically back to back, was at once the largest in size, and the most splendid in its features, of the religious edifices of the capital. Raised on a lofty basement on the eastern slope of the Velia, and looking down into the hollow in which the Colosseum was injudiciously placed, it might command even more remark and admiration than that masterpiece of imperial grandeur. The mausoleum which Hadrian created for himself on the further bank of the Tiber far outshone the tomb of Augustus, which it nearly confronted; of the size and dignity which characterized this work of Egyptian massiveness, we may gain a conception from the existing remains; but it requires an effort of imagina-

* "Spartian, Hadr. 19, gives a long enumeration of these works. It was remarked that Hadrian modestly refrained from inscribing his name upon any one of them, except the temple he dedicated to Trajan. Among other undertakings he employed an architect named Decrianus to remove the colossus of Nero, the face of which had been altered into a Sol, from its place on the slope of the Velia to another site. He does not seem to have accomplished the design of Apollodorus to erect a companion statue to Luna."

tion to transform the scarred and shapeless bulk before us into the graceful pile which rose column upon column, surmounted by a gilded dome of span almost unrivalled, and terminating in the statue of the beatified builder, whose remains reposed below. The Mole of Hadrian was, next to the Colosseum, the most distinguished specimen of the style of architecture which we designate as Roman, whencesoever really derived; which by raising tier upon tier of external decorations, after the number of stories required within, adapted to civil and domestic purposes the monumental grandeur of the Grecian. Besides these and other erections of his own, Hadrian is noted as the restorer of many famous buildings of an earlier date, such as the Septa, the Pantheon, the temple of Augustus, and the baths of Agrippa. But his services in these cases may have been but slight. However liable Rome was to suffer from fires, earthquakes, and inundations, we can hardly suppose that these structures, most of which had been repaired by Titus or Domitian, could already require again extensive renovation.* — *Ibid.*, pp. 479–481.

The reign of Hadrian's adopted son and successor, Antoninus Pius, is chiefly of interest on account of the personal character of the sovereign, which is one of the most amiable and attractive in the whole series of Roman Emperors; and we pass, therefore, to a brief notice of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a man of far greater ability and of equal worth. The principate of this Emperor covered a period of about nineteen years, and was marked not only by repeated incursions of the barbarians on the frontiers, and by a devastating pestilence in Italy, but also by the first appearance of those symptoms of decay in the Empire which a few years afterward became everywhere apparent. In his military operations, Aurelius, though a student and a philosopher rather than a soldier, was generally successful, and the victories which he gained in the field, in his later years, either in person or by his generals, fully redeemed the reverses which the Roman arms had experienced at the commencement of his reign. But he could not restore the early faith of the Romans, or substitute for it

* "The Tiburtine villa of Hadrian is entirely destroyed. Its site is said to be ascertained, and its limits, eight miles in circuit, may perhaps be traced. It embraced, besides the residence and quarters for the guard, buildings modelled on the Lyceum and Academy, the colonnade called Pœcile, the Prytaneum, &c. at Athens, a Canopus which may have represented some edifice at Alexandria. In its gardens was a space laid out after the fashion of the Vale of Tempe, a Tartarus, and perhaps, on the other hand, Elysian Fields. Spartian, *Hadr.* 26; Victor, *Cæs.* 14."

his own philosophical speculations. It was the misfortune of this wise and humane ruler, that he lived too late to exercise the conservative influence which at an earlier period might have strengthened the bonds of the Empire, and too early to comprehend in all its bearings the great revolution which even now threatened the state.

With the death of Marcus Aurelius, as we have already stated, Mr. Merivale closes his "History of the Romans under the Empire." The period which is thus included within his narrative, and of which we have now taken a brief survey, is the most brilliant in the annals of imperial Rome. Beginning with the foundation of the monarchy by Augustus, and its consolidation by that sagacious statesman and his first two successors, we have within the limits of two centuries the record of all her greatness and glory as the mistress of a world, which for the most part had been conquered by the Republic. From the accession of Commodus, on the death of Aurelius, we begin to trace the waning fortunes of the Empire, and thus enter on a new phase of her existence. The revolution which took place within the next century and a half was even more momentous than that which is described in the first two volumes of Mr. Merivale's work; and every reader must regret that the story which he has related with such rare ability has not been rounded into completeness according to the original intention of the historian. But even with this deviation from a well-considered plan, and with the defects in its execution which we have pointed out at the commencement of this article, his History must always stand as a splendid monument of his learning, his candor, and his vigorous grasp of intellect. Though he is in some important respects inferior to Macaulay and Grote, he must still be classed with them as one of the second great triumvirate of English historians.